

PEEPS AT ANCIENT
CIVILISATIONS

ANCIENT JERUSALEM

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By JAMES BAIKIE

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JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

The slope from below the Temple area to the left is Ophel, the site of the City of David



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ANCIENT JERUSALEM

BY

JAMES BAIKIE,

D.D., F.R.A.S.

AUTHOR OF

"PEEPS AT ANCIENT EGYPT," "PEEPS AT THE HEAVENS,"
"THE STORY OF THE PHARAOKS," ETC.

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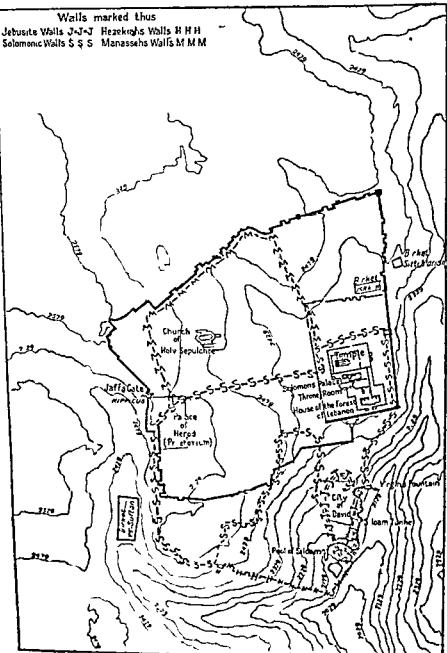
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* *These four illustrations are in colour.*

Walls marked thus

Jebusite Walls J-J-J	Hezekiah's Walls H H H
Solomonic Walls S S S	Manasseh's Walls M M M

Jebusite Walls J-J-J Hezekiah's Walls H H H
Solomonic Walls S S S Manasseh's Walls M M M



SKETCH-MAP OF ANCIENT JERUSALEM.

ANCIENT JERUSALEM

INTRODUCTION

WHEN we think of the great cities of the world, there are three which at once rise to our minds and claim the first place—Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem. There are, of course, other great cities of the ancient world which still keep their ancient fame in men's minds, and have still power to impress our imagination. Nineveh, "that great city", "Babylon the Great", "Hundred gated" Egyptian Thebes—these were all cities far greater than two, at least, out of the three which I have named, and their names are still linked with a sense of mystery and romance that springs from their immense age, and from the fact that the place which knew them once knows them now no more, and that only their thin ghosts seem to rise from the dusty mounds beneath which they have slept so long. But Nineveh, Babylon, and Thebes, just because of the long procession of years and centuries that has passed since they were living powers in the world, have become dim and shadowy to our minds, though they are now once more regaining something of their ancient place as we come to learn more of them. They belong to an old world—a world which seems almost incredibly ancient compared even with that of Jerusalem, and "between us and them there is a great gulf fixed," so that it is difficult (though it is steadily becoming less so) for us to pass to them, or for them to become real to us.

On the other hand, there are times of the modern world which are so much greater than anything which

Ancient Jerusalem

the ancient world ever knew that comparison is impossible London, New York, Paris these are names which suggest a vastness, the very dream of which never dawned upon the old world We call London and New York "modern Babylons", but the truth is that both of them have far outgrown their ancient namesake, vast and splendid though Nebuchadnezzar made her twenty-five centuries ago But though there is a romance and a fascination in the very vastness of these mighty modern human hives, none of them has the power to command our imagination and our interest as do Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem, because none of them can ever do for the human race what these three have done, each in its own way, once and for all For these have set the standard for all mankind in three separate and individual ways, so that the world can never again forget what they have done, and must always look back to their example as her guide in any fresh advance

Rome taught men the value and the power of Law, and showed by her example how courage and energy, guided and controlled by fixed laws, could outmatch and wear down any amount of the same virtues unguided and uncontrolled The Gaul or the Teuton was as brave as any Roman, and was often far stronger and more numerous, but more or less he fought for his own hand, and was a law unto himself, and the Romans, working under law, and therefore, as we would say, working as a team, and not as individuals, wore him down, until they had taught the world their secret, and men everywhere learned that if they wished to rule they must first learn to obey That was Rome's great secret, and the thing that has made her for ever memorable in the world

Little Athens had a still more precious secret to tell humanity It was that the greatest things in the world

Introduction

were not power and wealth, or anything that was merely material, but beauty and truth, that the mind mattered more than the body and should rule it always, but that where mind and body were kept in the true relation to one another both were at their best. And so her message to the world consisted in the most perfect examples of beauty that human art has ever produced, and in a leadership of human thought which ever since men have been glad to follow.

Jerusalem could never have done either of these things. She had no power to compel men into an ordered world, as the Roman did; the Greek's beautiful art was an abomination to her, and his restless curiosity of thought an impiety. She was a little, out-of-the-way rock-fortress, set in a backwater of humanity, whose great stream rolled beyond her reach or desire. But she did a greater thing than either Rome or Athens, or rather, perhaps, it would be true to say that a bigger thing was done within her, sometimes sorely against her will. For it was in Jerusalem that the lesson of lessons was taught to men—that it is man's relation to God that matters supremely, and either makes or mars him, and that it is how man thinks of God and is related to Him which settles the other question of how he shall behave to his fellow-man. It was in Jerusalem that that great lesson was wrought out slowly for nearly a thousand years; and it was at Jerusalem that the perfect answer to the two greatest questions of life—"What man is to believe concerning God, and what duties God requires of man"—was given when Jesus of Nazareth taught in her Temple courts, and was crucified outside her walls at Calvary.

Rome is imposing, with her vast power all controlled by her self-made law; Athens is for ever beautiful, with her splendid art and her keen thought; but from Jerusalem came the secret without which law and art

Ancient Jerusalem

and intellect are only bodies without a soul—the secret of how God stands to man, and how man may stand to God and to his fellows. If it were only for that one supreme fact that it was in Jerusalem that the Life of lives reached its consummation and its close on earth, the Holy City would always be the most wonderful place in all the world, but she has a long story of her own, of the most fascinating interest, before the Day of the Cross, and every stage of it is a preparation for the tragedy of Golgotha. So let us try to picture the city as she was, stage by stage throughout her history, until at last the purpose of her being was accomplished, and The Desire of All Nations came to her—to die.

CHAPTER I

HER SITUATION

BEFORE we go on to try to picture Jerusalem through the ages, we must first try to imagine to ourselves the site on which she stood, for a great part of the character of the city and its inhabitants can only be understood when we realise how she was placed, how she was surrounded, and what were the influences which consequently came to play most steadily upon her and her people. If you will look at a map of Palestine, you will see that she stands about two thirds of the way down the long mountain ridge which is the backbone of the country, and if you measure across country from the Mediterranean to the top of the Dead Sea, you will find that she comes about two thirds (roughly speaking) of the way from the one sea to the other. So Jerusalem is not quite central to the land of which she was for a while the capital and always the heart, but is a

Her Situation

little too far to the south and a little too far to the east and from the Mediterranean; and, as we shall see, both of these points had their share in settling her influence and the character of her people.

Try to remember from the very beginning that Jerusalem was always a mountain city—perched upon the top of the long ridge which was called the Mountain of Judæa. Of course, almost the whole of Central Palestine, which was all that the Hebrews really possessed for long, was just one long mountain ridge, which came sloping down from the heights of Lebanon in the north, climbed down by a succession of terraces through Galilee to the Plain of Esdraelon, which interrupted it for a little, then rose again into Mount Ephraim, with its broad, open valleys running up into the heart of the country, and finally gathered itself up into the stern and secluded Mountain of Judæa, which rolls off at last, from Beer-sheba, thirty-six miles south of Jerusalem, into the broken country known as the Negeb or South Country, and thence into absolute desert.

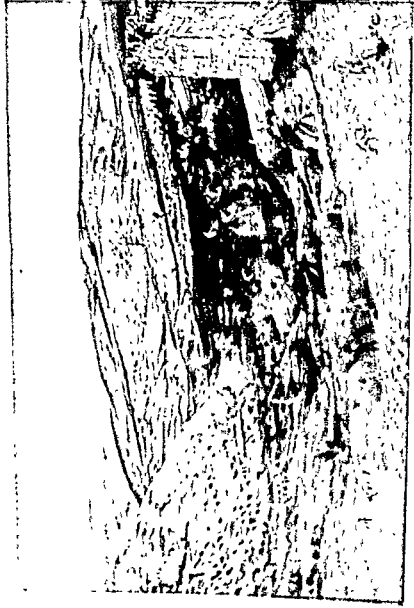
If you draw a line across this Mountain of Judæa, from the Mediterranean, a little north of the site of the old Philistine city of Ashdod, to the northern end of the Dead Sea, you will strike Jerusalem about two-thirds of the way along this line. The watershed of the ridge lies just a little to the west of her, at a height of nearly 2,700 feet, so that her view to the west is closed by the mountains that are "round about Jerusalem," as it is also on the north and the east; only on the south-east does a gap in the hills give a view across the Wilderness of Judæa and the tremendous hollow of the Dead Sea to the mountains of Moab. Yet the surrounding mountains are only a little higher than the city herself, for her loftiest point reaches 2,593 feet, and the lowest point of her ancient walls just touches

Ancient Jerusalem .

the 2,079 feet level. So that you see that Jerusalem stands just a little lower than the top of the Cheviot, exactly at the same height as the summit of Grisedale Pike, above Derwentwater, and 1,123 feet higher than the top of the Kirkstone Pass, between Ullswater and Windermere. If the height of his home makes the Highlander, the people of Jerusalem were all Highlanders; and, as we shall see in due time, they had a good many of the characteristics of the Highlander, both for good and evil.

Now let us try to picture more closely the position of Jerusalem on its mountain among the mountains. The main watershed, as we saw, passes a little west of her; then from the north a branch of the ridge strikes south-east, and passes the city a little to the east. This is the Mount of Olives. Between these two ridges the mountain slope on which Jerusalem is built gradually slopes down from a height only a little less than that of its two encircling mountains till it ends in the junction of the two valleys which separate the city from the surrounding hills. This slope is divided into two unequal ridges by a shallow valley which runs down between them to join the other two valleys south of the city. In fact, you may get a fairly good idea of the site of the Holy City if you imagine the part of your hand above your first finger and thumb to be the upper, undivided part of the site, and the fore-finger (slightly curved inwards) and thumb to be the two ridges into which the slope divides as it sinks downwards. The fore-finger is the western and larger ridge, which was only occupied in the time of Solomon and onwards; the thumb is the eastern ridge, which was occupied from the very beginning of the city's history to the very end.

But almost as important as the hills on which Jerusalem was built are the valleys which cut it off from the mountains round about. Of these the chief is that



THE MOUNTING OF THE VALLEYS OF HINNOM AND KIDRON.

(See pages 7 and 8.)

Her Situation

which starts north of the city as an insignificant little depression called the Wady el-Joz, or "Valley of the Walnuts." It curls round the north-easterly corner of the town, and then sinks rapidly down in a south-westerly direction in a steep, rocky ravine, which effectually cuts off the eastern hill of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. In this part of its course it is called the Wady Sitti Maryam, because of the Fountain of the Virgin (so-called), which is in the eastern ridge below the present town walls. Lower down still, where it has been joined by the other valleys, it is called the Wady en-Nar, or Valley of Fire. Below the city it falls rapidly towards the Dead Sea. The sides of this valley are very steep, and in earlier days, before it was partly choked by the ruins and rubbish which have been thrown into it for many centuries, it must have made the most effective of defences, with its precipitous sides, for the little town on the ridge above it. We know it better as the Valley of the Kidron, across which our Saviour used to walk to Bethany, to the house of Martha and Mary. The next main valley begins almost due west of the city, then turns sharply beneath the western wall, and runs due south till it has passed the southern corner of the walls and the steep slope beneath them; then it turns almost due east, and runs round the base of the west ridge until it joins the Kidron Valley to form the Wady en-Nar. It is called the Wady er-Rababi, which means "Fiddle Valley"; but you will know it better as the Valley of Hinnom. The third valley, which, in the present state of things, you would scarcely know to be a valley at all, begins north of the middle of the present north wall. It is very shallow at this point, and gradually sinks down as it passes through the city, dividing the eastern hill from the western, or the thumb from the fore-finger, if you like. It runs down close under the eastern hill, skirts

Ancient Jerusalem

the corner of the Temple Area, and finally joins the other two in the Wady en-Nar. It is called El-Wad, which just means "The Valley"; but we know it best as the Tyropæon Valley, or Valley of the Cheesemongers. Like the other two valleys, only more so, it was once much deeper; but it has been even more choked than they with the ruin of many sieges and the rubbish of many generations, and you would scarcely recognise it unless it was pointed out to you. But in ancient days it played a very important part in the history of the city, for it made the east hill, on which stood the City of David and the Temple Area, quite a separate thing from the western quarter, and rendered its defence a very much simpler thing than it would otherwise have been.

So now I hope that you have the picture of the position of Jerusalem clear before your mind's eye. Two great encircling ridges, then, the watershed and the Mount of Olives. Between them the high plateau, gradually sinking down, and dividing as it sinks, into two ridges, the east and west hills. One valley circling round the north-eastern angle, and then running down the eastern side of the east hill; another running down the lower half of the west hill, and turning east to meet its sister valley from the east; and a third running down between the two hills closer to the eastern than to the western hill, and also steeper on the eastern side. That is the site of Jerusalem as it was in the days of the city's greatness and as it is still, though time and warfare and slovenly Eastern habits have changed it to some slight extent and it is being changed still more, without the walls, by the more deadly results of modern business.

If you can see the picture in your imagination you will be able to realise many things which have been said about Jerusalem by her poets and prophets and

Her Situation

historians. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem": well, you have just seen how closely they fold her in their arms. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings"; for, however the herald might come, he was bound to be first seen by the watchmen in Zion as he crossed the high sky-line of the encircling hills. "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together," says a Psalmist; and you can see the little city crowded together on its two narrow ridges, between its deep valleys, and understand how in a time of stress, when the people wanted to see with their own eyes what was going on, it was not to the narrow lanes of the packed little rabbit-warren that they betook themselves, but to the flat roof-tops. "What aileth thee," asks Isaiah, "that thou art wholly gone up to the house-tops?" And, again, Jerusalem is the place "to which the tribes go up," literally as well as symbolically, for though she stood no higher than the average level of the Mountain of Judæa, all the approaches to her, save the one which ran along the top of the ridge, climbed up laboriously from lower ground, sometimes as much lower as the 3,200 feet which separated the city from the lower Jordan valley.

And when you think of that mountain ring girdling the place on every side, or those deep gorges that circled her walls, you can imagine the patriotic Hebrew, as he walked round the mountain-tops, and saw the whole city spread out before him, sloping to the morning sun, or perhaps still more impressively as he walked round her in the depths of her valleys, and saw her towers crowning her hills high above his head against the sky, feeling his heart swell with pride at the wonderful strength of the city which God had chosen as His rest for ever. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides

Ancient Jerusalem

of the north, the city of the great King. . . . Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following." There is scarcely a capital in the world that lends itself to such a single eye-sweep of her strength as does Jerusalem.

Yet with it all she had her disadvantages. The barren limestone ridges on which she was perched, and whose bones break out everywhere around her through the scanty cloak of soil which tries to cover them, were almost bare of wood. Here and there clumps of olive-trees or cypresses found a poor nourishment in her gorges; but while you read of the mountains that are round about Jerusalem, there is never any mention of her trees. One of the reasons of that deficiency was, of course, her other deficiency—the want of water. Her three valleys are practically bare and stony ravines, with no stream flowing through them, save after rain in winter. Only at a single spot in the lower Kidron Valley is there what the Hebrews called "living water," a spring which rises continually from the rock. This is the spring known in different times of the city's history as The Dragon's Well, Gihon, or, in more modern times, The Virgin's Fountain. Its position determined, as we shall see, the original site of the city, and to secure its scanty supply of water was the constant preoccupation of the Kings of Judah in time of danger; for the pools and cisterns which gathered the rain water would be quickly exhausted in time of siege, in spite of the astonishing number of them.

Perhaps the most apparent of all her disadvantages was the fact that she was not a natural centre at all. She was too far south to dominate the northern part of Israel, as was quickly proved, once the power of David and Solomon was removed, and she was out of



A STREET IN JERUSALEM See page 9

Her Situation

the road to anywhere. Look again at a good map of Palestine, and you will see that the natural route for traffic does not touch Jerusalem at all. It comes down from Babylonia and Assyria by Damascus, crosses the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee, travels up the Plain of Esdraelon to Megiddo, crosses the Carmel ridge there, and makes its way down the sea coast, "the way of the sea," to Egypt, leaving Jerusalem perched high and dry upon its bare ridge, miles away from anywhere. There were cross roads from the Mediterranean to the Jordan Valley and beyond, but the nearest important one was twelve miles away from the city. The only main road which touched her was the one which ran along the summit ridge of the central range of Palestine, and it was one of the least important in the land.

In one way that was not so much of a disadvantage as it seemed. Of course, it made the men of Jerusalem apt to become small-minded, eaten up with the idea of their own importance, and contemptuous of the great world beyond, just because they knew so little of it. The Hebrew of Jerusalem was, from first to last, narrow, bitter, unwilling to listen to new truth, and full of overweening pride in his own position as a citizen of the Holy City of Jehovah. Jesus, you will remember, got His disciples in Galilee, half heathen as it was, or in Samaria, which the man of Jerusalem counted worse than heathen, but He got few or none in Jerusalem, His Father's own city. But, on the other hand, during all those long years when the Hebrew was being slowly taught to know the one true God, the position of Jerusalem, the heart of his worship, was a great advantage. Had his capital been near to any of the busy highways of the ancient world, the faith of the Hebrew would almost certainly have been smothered and crushed out beneath one or other of the competing heathenisms which came and went

Ancient Jerusalem

along the great bridge of the nations which ran along the coast-line of his land.

But as it was, perched upon his lonely and remote mountain-top, the Hebrew could, if he wished, be as distant from all that as he chose to be. He had only to take a few steps westward from his watch-tower to be able to see "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them" go glittering and clanking by on the distant coast road beyond the foot-hills, and yet he could be almost as isolated from them as though he dwelt in a hermitage. Every now and again he was tempted to go down from his lodge in the wilderness and mix with the stream below, but every time he did it he found by bitter experience that he was the loser. His true place was withdrawn upon his holy mountain, his true work in the world to nourish in quiet the flame of the great thought about God which it was his mission to give to the world at last; and, with all its disadvantages, there was no place so well fitted as Jerusalem for the accomplishment of that purpose.

One more feature of her position we must notice before we close this chapter, which has grown so long. Jerusalem may be a mountain city, but she has the desert at her very door. You remember that the only gap in the ring of mountains which girdles her is to the south-east, where she looks across the great gulf of the Dead Sea to the Mountains of Moab. "Fire Valley" (Wady en-Nar), which continues the gorges of the Kidron and Hinnom, runs with its wild ravines down through the Wilderness of Judæa to the Dead Sea, so that the desert thrusts a long, gaunt finger right up to the southern door of the city. "Jeshimon," "Devastation," the Hebrew called the terrible stretch of tortured and burning rock and ravine which lies between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, "one of the driest and most poisoned regions of our planet."

Her Situation

With that terrible neighbour always under his eyes to hint at death and the things which lead to death, God's prophets never lacked an illustration to bring home to the man of Jerusalem the sombre lesson of the wages of sin. The sirocco that sweeps up periodically from the south-east, parching the city with its burning breath, was the "dry wind of the places of the desert towards the daughter of my people," which, as Jeremiah foresaw, came "neither to fan nor to cleanse," but to destroy.

Yet the desert, too, had its gifts to offer to Jerusalem. Once and again it was the refuge of her heroes when hard pressed. David found his shelter there when he fled before Absalom, and, at the other end of the story, Judas Maccabæus and his men did the same when the city was taken by the Macedonian Seleucids. And it was from the desert, with its clean-swept austerity, that there came to the city behind some of the greatest of the prophets, who tried to teach her to cleanse her ways. Amos, at Tekoa, and Jeremiah, at Anathoth, both looked daily on its stern face before they came to speak their message of God's judgment. It was from the wilderness that John the Baptist appeared with his message of repentance; and it was to the wilderness that a greater than John retreated to ponder over the significance of His Baptism, and to learn that submission to His Father's will which in the end made Him "set His face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem" and to the Cross.

So we see the little city on its hill-tops, its back to the ways of the world and its face to the wilderness, as a picture of its destiny. *We have now to try to trace out the stages by which that destiny was slowly wrought out.*

Ancient Jerusalem

CHAPTER II

JERUSALEM IN ABRAHAM'S DAY; AND IN AKHENATEN'S

I WONDER if there has ever been another city in the world which has had such a story of glory and shame, and, above all, of disaster upon disaster, as Jerusalem! "The bare catalogue of the disasters which have overtaken Jerusalem," says a famous scholar, "is enough to paralyse. . . . Besides the earthquakes which have periodically rocked her foundations, the City has endured nearly twenty sieges and assaults of the utmost severity, some involving a considerable, others a total, destruction of her walls and buildings; almost twenty more blockades or military occupations, with the wreck or dilapidation of prominent edifices; the frequent alteration of levels by the razing of rocky knolls and the filling of valleys; about eighteen reconstructions . . . ; the addition of suburbs and the abandonment of parts of the inhabited area; while over all there gathered the dust and the waste of ordinary manufacture and commerce. . . . There also have happened two intervals of silence, after Nebuchadrezzar and after Hadrian, during which the City lay almost, if not altogether, desolate and her natives were banished from her; and five abrupt passages from one religion to another, which even more disastrously severed the continuity of her story. . . ." Since that was written Jerusalem has known another change of masters, though in the Great War the tide of strife was carefully kept by our commander from approaching too near to the Holy City, and more harm was done to her by her Turkish possessors and their allies than by the warlike operations which wrested her from their hold. She has also known another outbreak



THE SITE OF THE CITY OF DAVID

The slope in the middle is the actual site and the dark excavations in the foreground are the ancient Jebusite wall

Jerusalem in Abraham's Day

of the bitter religious strife which makes one almost despair of the fulfilment of her Psalmist's ancient prayer: "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." As the grey old city sits there upon her two hills, with the pinchbeck modern city around her, with which she has no single community of interest, she seems still to echo the cry which her prophet put into her lips in the day of her desolation: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me."

From the very beginning of her story she seems to be surrounded with an atmosphere of "wars and rumours of wars," and her first appearance upon the stage of history is as the background to the welcome of a victorious chief. It is nearly 4,000 years ago. Abram, the nomad chief, who has been living with his vassals and his flocks and herds at Hebron, seventeen miles to the south, is returning with his little troop of retainers from his amazing chase of and victory over the four Kings of Elam and Mesopotamia who had invaded the land. The head of his column passes the ridge to the north of Jerusalem, and begins the descent into the Valley of Walnuts and the rugged depths of the Kidron gorge. As the weary men come level with the Dragon's Well, near the foot of the long ridge on their right, they see a peaceful procession coming down to meet them from the little hawk's nest of a town whose rude walls rise above them. It is headed by a venerable and stately figure—"Melchizedek, King of Salem," who is also, as most kings were in those early days, a priest, "priest of El-Elyon," or "God-Most-High"—a fitting God for the little mountain city. The Priest-king comes out through the water-gate of his town, with its three great slabs of stone, and as he meets the victorious chieftain his hands are raised in blessing. Behind him come his servants with bread and wine, to refresh

Ancient Jerusalem

Abram's worn out men Abram was not in the mood for compliments from every little kinglet, as he showed in a moment when the King of Sodom tried to take part in Melchizedek's welcome, but he evidently recognised in the aged Priest king of Salem a greater man than himself, and in his God the same Being whom he himself adored, and he bowed his head to receive the old man's blessing, and ordered his servants to set aside a tenth part of the loot from his victory for an offering to God-Most-High

Then Melchizedek turns back to his little city on the hill top again—a mysterious figure whom we only see for this one moment—and Abram passes on to his tents at Hebron We hear no more of this ancient Priest-king for more than 2,000 years, and then an early Christian disciple, writing to his fellow-countrymen the Hebrews, called up once more the name of this saint of the past, and said one thing about him over which men have puzzled ever since "This Melchizedek, King of Salem, Priest of God Most High," he said, "without father, without mother, without pedigree" What did he mean by such a strange statement? Well, in our next glimpse of Jerusalem we hear of something which may suggest a kind of a meaning for his words, but, after all, it is only a kind of an explanation, and I suspect that the writer meant much more than we can understand as yet So Melchizedek goes, as mysterious and unexplained as ever, and the mists come down again and hide Jerusalem for another 600 years

When the cloud lifts we are living in a very troubled world For the last century or so Palestine has been held in the strong hands of Egypt, and all her little states and kingships have been the humble and obedient vassals of whatever Pharaoh was sitting on the throne at Thebes Jerusalem, like the rest, has been for several generations as faithful a servant to Egypt as any of

Jerusalem in Abraham's Day

them But now troubles have been gathering over Palestine in the north a new race of rough soldiers, the Hittites, have been pushing their way into the land, and plotting with discontented chiefs to overthrow the Egyptian power, and from the eastern side of the Jordan a lot of rude tribes from the desert have been coming in and threatening town after town—we call them the Habiru, and they are very troublesome, even if, as yet, they are not dangerous to a really strong city

Worst of all, it seems that Egypt's hand is weakening Sixty years ago, if such things as are happening now every day had been reported to Pharaoh, he would have been up here with an army as fast as infantry could march and chariots drive, and all the trouble would have melted away like mist before the sun but this present Pharaoh seems different He cares for nothing but religion, and his new God is not a warrior god as the old gods of Egypt were, but seems to speak of nothing but peace and love Now peace and love are all very well when you can get them, but when an army of Habiru is hammering at your gates an extra Egyptian regiment to strengthen your garrison would be a great deal more to the point

So, at least, thought poor Abdi Khiba, who was sitting in the seat where once Melchizedek had sat, and was ruling, or trying to rule, Jerusalem and its little ring of surrounding country in the interests of Egypt By a strange chance we have some of the letters which this vassal king of Jerusalem wrote to his suzerain, the Pharaoh Akhenaten, at his Holy City of Akhetaten, and they make interesting and somewhat pathetic reading One of the very first statements that Abdi Khiba makes calls up to our minds again the curious statement in Hebrews about Melchizedek Abdi Khiba holds his position in Jerusalem, he tells his overlord, by special appointment of the Pharaoh "Verily, neither my

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father nor my mother set me in this place. The mighty hand of the King hath installed me in the house of my fathers." What did Hebrews say—"Without father, without mother, without pedigree"? The two things seem strangely alike. May it have been that all that was meant in the case of Melchizedek, as in that of Abdi Khiba, is that the kingship of Jerusalem was not hereditary, but depended on the will of her overlord, the Pharaoh of Egypt? We do not know, probably we never shall.

However he got his position, poor Abdi Khiba was finding it anything but a pleasant one. The Habiru trouble was coming closer and closer to his gates, and when he reported the case to Egypt, he was slandered to Pharaoh as a useless croaker. "Because I say, 'The lands of the King, my Lord, are being lost,' therefore am I slandered before the King, my Lord." Bit by bit things grow worse. Now the royal caravans are being robbed in the fields of Ajalon, only fourteen miles from Jerusalem, and Abdi Khiba can no longer guarantee their safety. "A city of the King, Beth Ninurta," in the territory of Jerusalem, has gone over to the enemy, and still Egypt will not send troops. Even when some Egyptian soldiers are sent the Egyptian viceroy kept them for his own service instead of sending them to garrison Jerusalem. "Let the King, my Lord, know this: when the King, my Lord, sent a garrison, Yankhamu took it all." But, in spite of this blunder, the viceroy was Abdi-Khiba's only hope. Things might still be saved if he was sent to look after them. "The whole land of the King is going to ruin, send Yankhamu, that he may care for the King's land."

The poor bewildered King of Jerusalem evidently realised that unless he could get a friend at Court there was little chance of his piteous appeals for help being listened to. He knew the secretary who had the task of

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translating into Egyptian the cuneiform in which he wrote; and now and again he adds a note at the end of his letter, begging this man to use his personal influence with Pharaoh. "To the scribe of the King, my Lord, thus speaks thy servant Abdi-Khiba: 'Bring clearly before the King, my Lord, these words, All the lands of the King, my Lord, are going to ruin.'" It was all to no purpose; probably the scribe knew his own interests better than to make himself the mouthpiece of an unpopular teller of bad tidings. King Akhenaten went his own way, and his provinces fell away from him one after another, till, of the great Egyptian empire in Asia, next to nothing was left, and his successors had to conquer Palestine all over again.

Whether Jerusalem fell, and its unhappy King with it, we cannot tell. All we know is that at last the despairing man sent a letter to the Pharaoh, pleading that at least he might be rescued from the coming doom. "If there are no troops this year," he wrote, "let the King send an officer to fetch me and my brothers, that we may die with my Lord, the King." Whether even that was done, we do not know. Abdi-Khiba may have succeeded in holding out for Egypt in his little hawk's nest on the rock till better times came; or he may have been relieved and taken down to fill some minor post about the Egyptian Court, and to eat his heart out in exile from his native land; or, perhaps most likely of all, he may have perished in the sack of his city, the first of so many that Jerusalem was to endure. Who can tell? All we know is that the first authentic voice that we hear out of Jerusalem is crying, as so many later voices cried *from the same place, for the salvation that seemed to tarry so long*; and that, so far as we can see, it, like the others, was a voice crying in the wilderness.

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CHAPTER III

THE CITY OF DAVID

THERE was a gap of 600 years, you remember, between the Jerusalem of Melchizedek and that of Abdi-Khîba, and now another 400 years pass before we see the city again. I do not think you would find that it had changed much in those four centuries, or even in the thousand years since Melchizedek's time. I wonder if you realise how tiny a place the city was in those days, and, indeed, for long after? The Jerusalem of to day, by which I mean, of course, the ancient city within the fifteenth century walls, not the modern abomination outside them, would go quite comfortably into Hyde Park, so that you see that even at its biggest it can never have been very big, but the first Jerusalem that we can see—the city that stood for a thousand years on the southern slope of the eastern hill, the city that Melchizedek ruled and Abdi-Khîba despaired of and David captured—would pack away into one of the smaller of our city squares without crowding anybody. Look at our outline plan, and you will see how small it was.

You will notice, as you look, that it is altogether outside the present city walls, and that it occupies, not the highest point of the eastern hill, as you would have expected, still less the highest point of the western hill, which rises above even the eastern, but only a comparatively low ridge at the southern end of the east hill. Why did the Jebusites (as the race which built Jerusalem is called) ever put their little fortress in such a position, where it is overlooked, at all events, though not within bowshot range, by other hills? Well, you remember that we saw, in Chapter I, that there was only one spring of "living water" in the neighbourhood,

The City of David

and water was the one thing that no city, not even a Jebusite one, could do without, however little it might be used for cleaning purposes. The Jebusites had to set their little hill-fortress where it would be within reach of the Dragon's Well; and that meant that it had to be built where you see it, just above the spring, so that they could get the water without too much labour themselves and hinder their enemies from getting it. So the water question settled where the city should stand, as it has done again and again in other cases.

What kind of a city did the Jebusites build on their narrow little ridge? We can't see it now, save for a little bit or two of its ancient walls, but we can get quite a good idea of it from other towns of the same race which have left more traces of themselves. First of all, they built a wall round about the place they meant to occupy, and we know pretty well what it was like, because some of it was excavated just a few years ago. The bit of wall that was found was still twenty-three feet high, so that we must imagine it to have been considerably over thirty feet high when it was at its full strength. It was built very thick at the bottom, and sloped gradually back, growing thinner as it went upwards. Probably it had towers or bastions at intervals, so that the defenders could command the foot of the wall and prevent the sappers of any enemy from getting at it.

Round the east, south, and west sides of the tongue of hill this great wall crowned steep slopes, almost amounting to precipices in places, so that there was not much chance of an attack on any of these sides; but on the north side the east hill sloped upwards, gradually rising above the site of the city, and it was there that an attack was to be feared. But on that side a little valley ran down into the Tyropæon Valley on the west side of the hill, and made a natural fosse in front of the wall; and where this valley did not reach, the Jebusites,

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with tremendous labour (they had only flint tools, with perhaps a little copper, remember), cut a trench eight feet deep and ten feet wide through the solid rock

Within this strong rampart they might think themselves secure, for nobody, in those days, had siege engines that could make any impression upon it, and even if they had, no engines could be brought near to the wall except on the north, where the trench and valley made it pretty difficult. But what if their enemy, whoever he might be, simply sat down beside the Dragon's Well and took possession of their water supply? Of course, the city folk could make it pretty uncomfortable for any besieger down in the valley by their archery, or by rolling big stones down upon him, but that was not much use if they were dying of thirst all the time. So these ingenious Jebusites set to work to solve this great problem of how to get at the water of the Dragon's Well even though an enemy were outside the walls. First, they sunk the floor of the cavern where the spring gushed forth. (It was an intermittent spring, which only gushed at intervals, and the story went that a great dragon drank up the water every now and then and poured it out again—that is why it was called the Dragon's Well.) Then they ran a tunnel away back behind the spring into the rock, until they judged that they had got so far that they were underneath the city. Last of all, they sunk a shaft from above within the city walls till it joined the tunnel below. The first time they tried the shaft they began to sink it much too far west, but the second attempt was successful. So now they could climb up and down their shaft and get at the water in the cave without ever being seen by an enemy. It must have been a toilsome job, climbing down the shaft with the empty pitchers, and still more so getting up with the full ones, but it meant safety, and that was everything.



The City of David

So the Jebusites slept soundly at nights; and when they heard that David, the new King that those pestilent Hebrews had chosen, was coming with his army to attack their city, because he did not care to have an enemy's fortress sitting right in the middle of his country and cutting it in two, they were rather amused than alarmed. David would only break his head against their strong walls, as others had done; and now, with their water-shaft, they could laugh at the danger of thirst. David duly appeared with his army, and had a look round about the walls of Jerusalem. To the confident Jebusites it was as good as a play to see his rather ragged regiments marching round in the bottom of their valley, and looking up vainly at the lofty precipices and the big wall above them to seek a possible weak spot.

Indeed, they thought the whole business a colossal joke. They gathered together all the lame and blind folk in the place—quite a number, no doubt, though the town was so small, for rheumatism and ophthalmia were rife in ancient Palestine—and paraded them on the walls. Then they shouted down to David and his men in the valley below: "Look at our new defenders—quite good enough for you! Thou come in hither! the blind and the lame are enough to keep thee out!"

David, however, was an ill man to mock at. He had not been going round about Jerusalem for nothing. He knew the secret of the water-shaft just as well as the Jebusites themselves, for "it is difficult to keep a secret in the East if it is worth anyone's while to divulge it"; and no doubt he had had his spies in the city long before this, and knew all about its strength and weakness. He called his captains together. "Smite me these blind and lame ones," he cried, for the Jebusite taunt had rankled. "Climb up the water-shaft and do it, and he that doeth it will I make my Captain of the Host." Joab, the King's fierce cousin, needed no further hint. With a

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band of picked men he waded along the tunnel at the back of the cave of the Dragon's Well. One of his men climbed the shaft and let down a rope for his companions. A single sentry at the top of the shaft could have destroyed the whole band as they painfully climbed up, one by one, but the Jebusites had been too sure of themselves even to set the one man who would have saved them.

At last the forlorn hope is gathered in the stairway at the top of the shaft, waiting eagerly for the sound of David's assault on the northern wall. At last they hear his trumpet sounding and the crash of his attack, and as the Jebusite garrison rush to man the walls, they are taken in the rear by Joab and his men from the water-shaft, and scattered in wild confusion. Joab had well won his promotion, though it would have been better for David if his evil genius had fallen in the assault. "So David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it David's-Burgh." The Hebrews had got a king only a few years before, now they had got a capital as well. No better place, in some respects, could have been chosen. Of course, it was somewhat out of the way and far south, but that objection was outweighed by the fact that hitherto it had belonged to none of the tribes. The tribes of Israel were always touchy and jealous of each other, and in particular Ephraim and Judah were continually quarrelling, "Ephraim envying Judah, and Judah vexing Ephraim." If the capital had been fixed in the territory of either tribe, there would have been a quarrel at once. But here was a city which had been nobody's, and therefore brought no bitterness along with the preference given to it. Ephraim, as well as Judah, could take a pride in the capital which had been won by the valour of both tribes. Just as Madrid was chosen to be the capital of Spain by Philip II, though there were far finer cities in his country than that unattractive

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place, just as Washington was chosen to be the capital of the United States, and to stand in a district which belongs to no state, and just as Canberra has been chosen in our own time to be the capital of Australia, so Jerusalem suited the policy of the new King of United Israel. And so she entered upon her strange and momentous destiny.

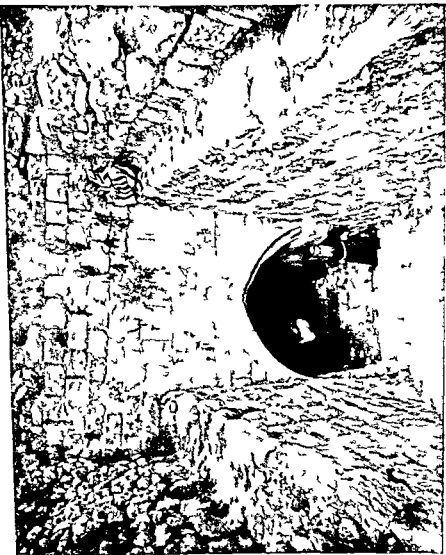
After his capture of the city, David did not do very much in the way of making her greater or grander. He had too busy a life and too many wars on his hands to have time for that. Even when he made an attempt to build a temple to hold the Ark of the Covenant, that old and honoured relic of the birthday of his nation, he was forbidden because his life had been full of bloodshed. All he was allowed to do was to gather money and material for his son Solomon to use. What he could do, he did. First, he patched the breach which he had himself made in the north wall of the city. He did it, as our excavators found recently, with a hastily rushed-up wall, and then later he planted a strong fortress, which he called Millo ("The Filling"), right across the breach to make it secure. He built a palace of stone and cedar for himself—not a very big one, for it was not found good enough for Pharaoh's daughter when she came up to marry Solomon—and he built a barracks for his foreign body-guard, "The Mighty-Men," as they were called. Then he brought up the Ark into his new capital—notice that it is always "brought up" when anything comes into this mountain city—and lost his first wife, Michal, Saul's daughter, by his enthusiasm over the event. The rest he had to leave to the gorgeous son who was to succeed him.

Yet, though there is so little mark of his hand upon the place, Jerusalem has always been, and always will be, the City of David. There is only one name that has hallowed it more conspicuously than his, and that is

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the name of his "Greater Son," who died beyond its walls. "We see him in temptation, in penitence, in grief, or dancing with that Oriental ecstasy of worship which had not yet died out of the Hebrew religion; now bent beneath the scandals of his family; now rending his garments at the death of Amnon; now weeping on the way to the wilderness when he flees from Absalom; or listening to the arguments of his subjects against himself; or besought by his soldiers to remain within the walls while they go out to war, *that the lamp of Israel be not quenched*; or tenderly nourished through the feebleness of old age. The drama of Jerusalem is never more vivid than while David is its hero."

One thing David did not do. Apparently he did not exterminate the conquered Jebusites, as most other conquerors of his race would have done. He was not always so merciful; and while he deserves all credit for his mercy, it proved a doubtful boon, in the end, to his city. The Jebusite strain remained in Jerusalem, and with it the tendency to the Jebusite customs, which remained a weakness and a snare to the very end. Jerusalem always had an ugly and perverted strand in the very heart of all her religiousness; and, knowing what we know of the Canaanite worship, we can believe that the prophet Ezekiel was right when he ascribed that evil twist to the Jebusite blood in her. "Thine origin and thy nativity," he said to Jerusalem, "is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite."



THE VIR IN A FOUNTAIN See pages 10 20 24 47 48

Solomon in all his Glory

CHAPTER IV

SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY

HITHERTO Jerusalem had remained pretty much what it was from the beginning, a thousand years ago a mere hill fortress, with a huddle of poor houses crowded together within its strong wall, and nothing to mark it out from any of the scores of similar little strongholds which were scattered over the countryside Gezer, for instance, of which we only hear once or twice in the whole story of Israel, was very much like what Jerusalem must have been—only Gezer was bigger than Jerusalem David's little palace and the barracks for his body-guard were the only buildings which told that the city was a king's capital

But when Solomon came to the throne he at once set about changing all that, and did it so effectually, and with such a superb disregard of the proportion between the kingdom which he ruled and the splendour of the capital which he was creating for it, that his magnificence has made his reputation ever since—though it ruined his successor All over the East the name of Solomon is still literally one to conjure with he is the mighty magician who had command of all the spirits of the earth and air, and had only to speak for them to do his bidding, to raise him palaces and temples, or to transport the objects of his desire from the ends of the earth Perhaps it was a pity, both for him and his descendants, that the reality did not correspond more nearly with the legend For Solomon's magnificence was reared, not upon magic arts, but on the forced labour and the heavy taxation which he wrung from a small and poor nation As long as he lived the nation was like the picture of Issachar in the Blessing of the

Solomon in all his Glory

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Tribes, "a strong ass crouching down between the two burdens" of the corvée and the tax-master, but poor Rehoboam had to pay dearly for all the glory

It was said of Augustus, the first Emperor of Rome, that he "found Rome brick, and left it marble" Well, you might say of Solomon that he found Jerusalem a fortress, and left her a royal city, but the picture would not be complete unless you added that he found Israel a single nation, and left her two, and those two bitter enemies of one another If the wisdom of Solomon is to be estimated, not by his proverbs and his knowledge of botany—"from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall"—but by his success in the task of ruling his people which God had given him, then there are few kings who have made a poorer job of it than the Wise King, whose idea seemed to be that his people were given him only to be fleeced

I fancy that his big ideas began with his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter Of course, the Egypt of 1000 B C was a very different thing from the mighty empire of 500 years before, but the Eastern world still lived under the shadow of her past greatness, and no doubt Solomon was a very proud man when he learned that his proposal for a match with the daughter of Siamon or Sheshanq, whichever it may have been, was accepted, and that he was actually to be son in law to Pharaoh No doubt it was with many apologies for the poorness of her lodging that he brought the Egyptian princess up to the rough little fortress on the hill top such a contrast, with its waterless mountains on every side, to the broad Theban plain, with the mighty Nile flowing through it She might put up with it for a little, but it behoved Solomon to set his house in order Such a gorgeous bird of Paradise required a

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correspondingly gorgeous cage. So Solomon loosened his purse-strings, or rather the purse-strings of his people, and set to work to make his capital fit for a princess of Egypt to live in.

Let us do him the justice of saying that he did not forget that he had to build a house for God as well as one for Pharaoh's daughter and himself. In his fourth year he began to build the Temple, which was to bear his name for 350 years, and he took seven years to the task; but we do not forget that he was building his own house all that time as well, and that it took another six years after the Temple was finished to complete his own house to his mind. Seven years for God's House and thirteen years for his own is not just exactly the proportion one would have expected in David's son; but it was quite like Solomon—and a good many other people besides Solomon.

So now let us try to get some idea of this wonderful pile of new buildings which Solomon added to the little City of David. As to what either the Temple or the palace may have been like in architectural detail, I am going to say nothing, because I do not believe that there is anything certain to say. People have tried, scores of times, to make models of the Temple and all the buildings around it; but the thing is impossible, for the Bible accounts of these buildings are not clear enough to enable us really to see them. We know that they were very gorgeous, so much is plain from the Bible statements, and we may suspect that they were rather more gorgeous than beautiful. For we know that they were the work of a *Tyrian architect*, and Tyrian architecture was more famous for its splendour than for its taste. But beyond that we really know very little, and when you see a picture or a model professing to represent Solomon's Temple, the one

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thing that you may be reasonably sure of is that it was not like that.

But at least we know where the great King's buildings stood and the order in which they stood; and it will help us to get some idea of Jerusalem as Solomon left it if we try to realise this great mass of buildings which he added on to the north of the little hawk's nest on the east hill. You remember that the east hill rises considerably higher to the north of the City of David than the southern spur on which the old fortress was built. Indeed, the central part of the hill, just around the sacred rock, is at the 2,440 feet level, while the hill just above the Dragon's Wall (Virgin's Fountain), is only 2,279 feet high, so that there is a rise of 160 feet in a comparatively short distance. The rock platform at the summit of the rise was used in David's time as a threshing-floor, and David bought it from Araunah, its Jebusite owner, as a site for an altar. But it seems likely that long before that this rock had been a sacred place, where the Jebusites worshipped whatever god was signified by the name El-Elyon (God-Most-High). Anyhow, Solomon decided to place his Temple there.

First of all, he had to do a bit of levelling, for, though the rock platform was pretty broad, there was one corner on the south-west where he had to build up a big wall for about seventy feet, and fill up the space between it and the rock before he could get a level platform for the court of his Temple. Then upon this rock platform he laid out a great oblong enclosure, with a strong wall round it and two gates, one to the east, the other to the north. This made the outer court of the Temple. Within that another wall enclosed a smaller oblong court, with two gates corresponding to the outer two. A little east of the centre of this inner



ROBINSON'S ARCH

He od an o k eplac ng an ea l er b dge (see p 74)

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court he built his great Altar of Burnt-Offering on the crest of the rock—the same rock which is left projecting, rough and untouched, in the centre of the Mosque of Omar, or Dome of the Rock. Then behind the Altar rose the Temple itself, with its Holy Place, 70 feet long, $34\frac{1}{2}$ feet broad, and 52 feet high, and its *Debir* or Back, which later was called the Holy of Holies, and was $34\frac{1}{2}$ feet every way. Solomon's Temple, you see, was quite a small place, only about 124 feet long by 55 feet broad and 52 feet high (external measurements). It would go ten times over into the Hall of Columns at Egyptian Karnak, and the Hall of Columns is only a single chamber of that vast temple. But whatever could be done with cedar and bronze and gold to make it magnificent was done; and the fine new building rising within its broad courts on the topmost height of the hill, with its bronze and gold flashing in the sun, must have seemed a world's wonder to the simple country folk of the tribes.

A little lower down, perhaps ten feet lower, came another broad court, in the middle of which stood Solomon's own palace, with an extra wing built on specially at the west for the accommodation of that very great and expensive lady Pharaoh's daughter, who must not be crowded up along with the other harem ladies in the common palace. What the King's house was like, we cannot tell, but it is not probable that it was any less splendid than the Temple. Still lower down, perhaps twenty feet lower, came a great court of irregular shape, which sloped towards the south; and in this court stood, first, at its north side, the Throne Room, where was placed Solomon's wonderful throne of ivory and gold, with its twelve golden lions, and where the great King received the foreign monarchs, who came, like the Queen of Sheba, to "hear the wisdom of Solo-

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mon." The Throne Room opened, on its south side, into a Hall of Columns, at the door of which was the flight of steps called the *Threshold*, at which all courtiers and vassals, no doubt, had to lie down and kiss the ground before they entered the Presence, just as they did in Thebes before Solomon's father-in-law the Pharaoh. And lowest of all, perhaps another ten feet down, on the 2,400 feet level, came the House of the Forest of Lebanon, so called because of its cedar pillars, where 500 bucklers of beaten gold, 200 big ones and 300 smaller, hung when the bodyguard was not carrying them on parade.

The entire mass, temple and palace, with halls and courts, formed one great whole. It was strongly fortified, for each court could be cut off from the one above it, so that an enemy who had gained access to the first would find himself faced by a second with walls as strong as the one he had secured. But while it was really an exceptionally strong citadel, with its flanks secured by deep ravines, it was also a splendid witness to the power, and not less the pride, of the King who had created it. Such a set of buildings had never been seen, or even dreamed of, in Palestine before; and you can imagine the impression made by the gorgeous succession of halls in white limestone, cedar, and gold as they piled up one above another to the topmost pinnacle of the Temple porch.

The little old City of David, crouching beneath, with its crowded and dirty houses and its ancient ramparts, was a poor pendant for such a magnificent necklace. The time had come for Jerusalem to expand westwards as well as northwards. So Solomon evidently felt, for building now began on the south-west hill, beyond the Tyropæon Valley, and a bridge was thrown across the ravine from the south-west corner

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of the Temple Area, so as to join the old city and its new suburb. Herod rebuilt it, after the destruction of the old city, and you can still see the spring of the arch of his bridge. Western Jerusalem did not extend up the Tyropœon Valley, which was left outside its walls; but it spread over the south-west hill, and some little distance up the slope, until its north wall ran across from Fiddle Valley (Hinnom), to about the middle of the western side of the Temple area, and joined the wall of the Temple court there. So you are to imagine Solomon's Jerusalem as being rather like a U turned upside down, and with the curve joining its two legs rather thickened.

It was still but a small city, not much bigger than half the city inside the present walls; but Solomon saw to it that the life within it was as brilliant and costly as it could be made. For he had tastes which were luxurious to a high degree; he was allied by marriage with half the little kings and chiefs of the Near East, to say nothing of the Pharaoh of Egypt, and everyone of them would have to be entertained on a scale fitted to his rank when he came up to see how his daughter was getting on in Solomon's harem. Money was poured out like water. Forty years ago the chiefs of Israel scarcely knew what money meant; but now they learned quite fast, and learned, too, to spend it as fast as it came in, and sometimes faster. The King set them the example. "All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold," says the historian of his reign, "and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver; it was *nothing accounted of* in the days of Solomon." "And the King," he says again, "made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones."

A very lordly gentleman indeed! But how did he keep it up? For Israel was a small and a poor nation,

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inhabiting a poor and comparatively barren land. If you are going to make silver as the stones in Jerusalem, somebody has to pay for your extravagance sooner or later. Of course, King Solomon tried to keep up the gaudy show by trade, and he had his navy, with Tyrian sailors as its dry-nurses, going once in every three years to the Far East to bring "gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks." (A navy of Tharshish does not mean that they sailed to Tarshish in Spain; it means a navy of big sea-going ships, and the cargoes show that they traded to the East.) - But a navy that comes only once in three years, and brings only luxury cargoes even then, is not going to do much for trade or the prosperity of the country, you may be sure.

So Solomon's splendour all rested, in the end, on the backs of the poor small farmers, cultivating each his own little bit of stony land away up north, or east beyond Jordan. Every year the tax-gatherer had a bigger bill to present; and that was not all, for every year more men were called out by "Adoram, who was over the levy," to work on the King's great buildings without pay. And at last the distant tribes began to grumble. It was different for Judah and Benjamin, who were, so to speak, the "home counties." They were close to the capital, and at least got some value for their money and labour in the sight of all the shows, while the Court could not but spend a good deal of money in buying their produce. But the outland tribes—they never had a chance of seeing the great buildings, unless once a year. All they knew about them was that they cost far too much. They never had a chance of supplying the Court and being paid for their goods; all they knew of the Court was that its extravagance called away their sons and left the farm short-handed during the busiest part of the year.

Solomon in all his Glory

And so, at last, the grumbles grew into open complaints. Worst of all, the leader of the complainants, a young fellow named Jeroboam, had been a foreman of the forced labour levy himself, and knew all about the injustice of the thing. Solomon's reputation was so great that nothing serious happened so long as he lived; but the whole land was full of discontent, and the last days of the great King were by no means so bright or so happy as the first. David had done the work; Solomon spent more than David had earned; Rehoboam was left to pay the bill. Somehow I have always felt a kind of sympathy with Rehoboam, though he was such a fool.

CHAPTER V

FROM REHOBOAM TO HEZEKIAH

UNITED Israel had lasted only about sixty years or so when the bond which held the north and south together was loosened by the death of Solomon. We have just seen how strong was the feeling of discontent in the north over the perpetual levies and taxation of the great King. Even another Solomon would have found it no easy task to pacify the jealous and angry northerners; and Rehoboam, who succeeded his father, was very far from being that. Yet perhaps it is not fair to blame him, as though all the fault lay in his stupidity. Stupid he certainly was; but the main stupidity was not his but Solomon's, who created a situation such that only a miracle of tact and forbearance could have brought the nation through undivided.

Besides, we have to think of Rehoboam's upbringing. Reared in an Eastern harem, surrounded by women who

From Rehoboam to Hezekiah

these years of depression and helplessness, when Judah was mostly little more than the vassal of Israel (when she was not fighting unsuccessfully against her northern sister), that the conviction grew up in the minds of those who watched Jerusalem's stability, and contrasted it with the perpetual changes and misfortunes of Samaria, the northern capital, that she was indeed the Holy City, the true dwelling-place of God, who might be trusted to keep His own abode inviolate. That belief was not all the truth, but it had elements of truth in it; and it had the most profound influence upon the religious future of the Jewish race.

Meanwhile, things went badly enough. Five years after the beginning of Rehoboam's reign, Sheshanq, the Libyan Pharaoh of Egypt (the "Shishak" of 1 Kings xiv.), quite regardless of old alliances, invaded Palestine, and, if we may judge by his own triumphal list, plundered both Judah and Israel quite impartially. Poor Rehoboam had to take down the golden bucklers of his expensive father's bodyguard from the House of the Forest of Lebanon, and hand them over as a ransom for his capital. The bronze ones that he made instead were, doubtless, much more serviceable, and looked nearly as well; but it was a sore downcome for his pride. And then followed a long series of ups and downs, in which the only conspicuous distinction of the southern kingdom was that she kept steadily faithful to the House of David, even though she had to get rid of some of its bad kings by assassination; while dynasties and kings rose and fell in the successive capitals of Northern Israel, Tirzah, Jezreel, Samaria, like so many ninepins.

On the whole, however, in spite of their instability, the Kings of the north were an abler lot than those of the House of David, or perhaps it simply was that they had more resources behind them. Anyhow, Judah gradually fell, especially when her rival was under the

Ancient Jerusalem

able guidance of Omri and Ahab, who, whatever their faults, were skilful rulers, into a position of vassalage. Even a good king like Jehoshaphat of Judah had to go as a vassal ally with Ahab, and with his son Jehoram, on their expeditions against Ramoth-Gilead and Moab, and when Ahab's house had been wiped out by the savage usurper Jehu, and his grandson Joash was reigning in Samaria, the challenge of Amaziah of Judah to the northern house drew from Joash only bitter mockery and a most humiliating overthrow. After the disastrous battle of Beth shemesh, Jerusalem was stormed, for the first time since David took it. Joash made a breach of 600 yards long in her northern wall, and carried off all the treasures of the Temple and of King Amaziah's palace as loot. The blow apparently broke the strength of Judah, and though Amaziah continued to reign for many years longer, yet discontent with him culminated at last in a conspiracy and in his murder. With that curious devotion to the line of David which marked Judah all through, the nation set his sixteen year-old son, Uzziah or Azariah, upon the throne. He was to have a long and prosperous reign of more than fifty years, though his last years were clouded by the dreadful disease of leprosy.

But the main interest of Uzziah for us, as regards Jerusalem, is that now, for the first time for two centuries, we hear of building in the city. The shock of the disruption of David's kingdom had stopped Jerusalem's growth. Her expansion under Solomon had been planned for the capital of a kingdom of twelve tribes, there was more than ample room within Solomon's walls for the capital of a shrunken nation of two. Nor were the fortunes of Judah during those two centuries so prosperous that her internal well being should have prompted any expansion.

But now a change was at hand. Northern Israel,



THE POOL OF SILOAM. See pages 86 and 89.

From Rehoboam to Hezekiah

which, under the strong hand of Jeroboam II., had been prosperous beyond example, now began, after his death, visibly to sicken for her own. The shadow of the Assyrian giant began to fall across Syria and northern Palestine, and within less than twenty-five years of Jeroboam's death Samaria had fallen before Sargon of Assyria, and the northern tribes became "The Lost Ten Tribes." The decline of Samaria was, for the moment, the opportunity of Jerusalem; and though there was apparently no extension of the city as yet, Uzziah's reign was a time of great activity in the way of strengthening her ancient defences and creating new ones. Solomon's old walls were crowned with new towers, to command the Corner Gate (which is the present Jaffa Gate, by which most folks enter the city), the Valley Gate, at the south-west corner of the city, and the *Turn-of-the-Wall*, where Solomon's old wall turned round the southern corner of the west hill to run up the west side of the Tyropæon Valley. And now, for the first time, we hear of great war engines being made to defend Jerusalem. Assyria had had them for at least a century and a half, and on the alabaster slabs of Ashur-nasir-pal, in the British Museum, you can see the walls of ancient cities tumbling down before the blows of the Assyrian ram and the picks of the sappers. But now Jerusalem was to have something on her own walls wherewith to answer the challenge of the great soldier-power.

"And Uzziah made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal: and his name spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong." Jotham, Uzziah's son, carried on his father's work, and "built the Upper Gate of the House of the Lord, and on the wall of Ophel (i.e., the ancient walls of the City of David on the southern spur of the east hill) he built much." But

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Jerusalem was not destined to hear yet for awhile the thunder of the Assyrian siege engines, nor to see her own catapults and ballistas replying to them. Indeed, it is doubtful if she ever had that questionable privilege, for though she was certainly beleaguered, as we shall shortly see, by the Assyrian army of Sennacherib, it is probable that there was no actual siege, but merely a blockade, terminated by the recall of the division which Sennacherib had detached from his main force to deal with the rebellious little Jewish state.

Meanwhile, the first use of Uzziah's engines was against his own kinsfolk of Israel, for Pekah, son of Remaliah, the usurping King of the dying northern kingdom, allied himself with Rezin of Syria in order to force King Ahaz of Judah, Uzziah's grandson, to join them in an alliance against Tiglath Pileser III, the aggressive King of Assyria. Ahaz refused to join an alliance which seemed foredoomed to failure, but he was badly beaten in a pitched battle, and Jerusalem was besieged by the united forces of Israel and Syria. Uzziah's towers and engines, however, had rendered the city a hard nut to crack, and the allies made little progress with the siege, but King Ahaz, with his advisers, was sorely perturbed by the danger. "his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind." In his anxiety the King determined to do the most fatal thing he could have done—to call in the help of the Assyrian King. It was madness, for it would give the Assyrian just exactly what he was looking for—an excuse for meddling in the affairs of Judah, and reducing her to dependence upon Assyria, but it seemed to the wavering heart of Ahaz the only possible way of escape from an impossible situation.

He was still hesitating, when the prophet Isaiah was sent to meet him somewhere between the Virgin's Foun-

From Rehoboam to Hezekiah

tain and the Pool of Siloam, where he was examining the water-supply, as was natural in a time of siege, and to give him a message from the Lord. "Take heed, and be quiet," the message ran. "Fear not, neither be faint-hearted for these two stumps of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and for the son of Remaliah (Pekah)." Within a few years, the prophet said, the enemy whom Ahaz dreaded would be only a name of the past. Judah had no need to call in any allies, but if she did so it would be to her own hurt. If she put her trust in her God, all would be well; but "if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."

Poor frightened Ahaz, however, could not rise to such confidence. Pekah and Rezin were very near, and perhaps he felt that he had not been quite a good enough servant of Jehovah to expect very much from Him. He made his alliance with Tiglath-Pileser, and stripped the Temple of its treasures to buy the Assyrian's help; but what that help was worth his son Hezekiah found out before very long. Meanwhile, Ahaz went and met his new ally at Damascus, which Tiglath-Pileser had just captured from Rezin. There he took a fancy to a new kind of altar which he saw, and brought down the pattern to Jerusalem, and set it up in the Temple, much to the scandal of his subjects. But poor Ahaz and his wavering fancies are a small thing in the history of Jerusalem compared with the fact that we have seen in his reign the emergence of the greatest figure whom the city ever bred.

Isaiah of Jerusalem, the first of the two great prophets who bore that name, was born in the city during the reign of Uzziah, of noble stock, nearly related to the royal family. It was the shock of the great King's illness and death which first taught him that God had a message for him to give to his fellow-citizens and his King; and though we have seen the failure of his first

Ancient Jerusalem

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effort to influence the policy of Judah, henceforward for a whole generation he is the greatest figure in the national history, far eclipsing even a good King like Hezekiah. It was his triumphant faith in God's purpose for His Holy City, far more than any strength of her King or her statesmen, that carried Jerusalem victoriously through the trials that now lay before her, and for the next thirty years it is through his eyes that we see the city, with a vividness never before realised, "toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing," trembling before the Assyrian, or vaingloriously and prematurely exulting over his withdrawal, but always, through all her failings, God's own city, of which He says "I will defend to save it, for Mine own sake, and for My servant David's sake."

CHAPTER VI

THE ASSYRIAN CAME DOWN LIKE A WOLF ON THE FOLD

ONLY you must remember that the Hebrews and the other peoples on whom he came down were not just exactly such harmless and defenceless lambs as you might imagine from Byron's ringing verses. Even the Bible story of the wonderful deliverance of Jerusalem, which is written, of course, from the Hebrew point of view, lets you see that the blame did not all lie on one side, and Isaiah, especially, has plenty to say of the folly with which Judah plotted along with Egypt against Assyria, and the bad faith which the Hebrews showed. Of course, the Assyrians showed bad faith also, and, when they did, Isaiah turned on them as he had turned on his own countrymen, and defied them to do their worst, but in the beginning it was not Assyria that was to blame

The Assyrians

for the great invasion, but the other nations, Judah foremost among them, who had broken their word and provoked the attack which destroyed some of them, and from which Judah barely escaped.

Hezekiah, the greatest of the later Kings of Judah, came to the throne just after the Assyrians had sacked Samaria. There was no northern kingdom now to act as a buffer between Judah and the great conquering power from the north. Judah had to make up her mind whether she would side with Assyria or against her; and her word had been pledged to Assyria by Hezekiah's father, Ahaz. It was a bad bargain, no doubt; but if everyone who thinks he has made a bad bargain were to imagine that he could break it at his will there would be no living in the world at all. Well, Hezekiah had not been very long on the throne before the temptation came to him to break his bargain with the great northern power. He was seized with a dangerous sickness, and made a recovery which was deemed marvellous. Merodach-Baladan, the new King of Babylon, and the deadly enemy of Assyria, took advantage of the Jewish King's recovery to send an embassy to him, ostensibly to congratulate him, really to plot an alliance with him against Assyria. Hezekiah, proud of being taken notice of by the King of so famous a city as Babylon, welcomed the envoys, and showed them all his treasures, not forgetting his armoury, which meant more, for the Babylonian's purpose, than all the rest.

No doubt he was immensely surprised when Isaiah told him that he had made the mistake of his life, for these same Babylonians, of whose friendship he was so proud, would be the destruction of his kingdom, not in his day, but in the end. "Hear the word of the Lord," said the fearless prophet. "Behold the days shall come when all that is in thy house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day,

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shall be carried to Babylon And thy sons that shall issue from thee, whom thou shalt beget, shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon " Hezekiah was very penitent for the moment, but the temptation to go on plotting against his great overlord was almost irresistible, and it was made still more tempting by the fact that now Egypt was joined to the tempters

By this time Egypt was only a shadow of what she once had been A little later, the officer of Sennacherib judged her rightly when he compared her to a broken reed, on which, if a man leant, it would go into his hand and pierce him But all the little states of Palestine and Syria were dazzled by the old fame of the Land of the Nile, and did not understand how helpless she now was to resist the great enemy With a rebellious Babylon on the one hand, and mighty Egypt on the other to aid them against the Assyrian, was it not safe for them to rebel, and to break the Assyrian yoke once and for all from their shoulders? So it seemed to Hezekiah and his councillors

Isaiah, however, thought differently He liked the thought of alliance with Egypt as little as the alliance with Babylon, for he, alone of his countrymen, judged aright the weakness of Egypt Besides, no good could come of an alliance which rested on a broken word No doubt he made himself the most unpopular man in Jerusalem when he proclaimed that God was against all their scheming "Woe to the rebellious children," he cried, in the name of Jehovah, "who carry out a purpose which is not from Me, and strike a treaty, but not according to My spirit, that they may add sin to sin, that set forth to go down to Egypt and have not inquired at My mouth, to flee to the fortress of Pharaoh and take refuge in the shadow of Egypt Therefore

The Assyrians

shall the fortress of Pharaoh be your shame, and the refuge in the shadow of Egypt your confusion."

How truly he had judged the situation was speedily seen. Rebellion against Assyria broke out at Ashdod, the old Philistine city, led by a Greek mercenary soldier who is called in Sargon's annals "Iamani" (the Ionian). Sargon did not even come himself to put it down. He sent his "Turtanu," or chief of staff, with 420 of his guard, with other troops in proportion, no doubt; and this little force had captured Ashdod before the other conspirators had time to rub their eyes and see what was happening. The Ionian fled down to Egypt, upon whose help the rebels had counted; and Egypt's help consisted in humbly handing over the fugitive to Assyria, to be treated according to the usual merciful Assyrian way of dealing with rebels. That was in 713 B.C., and Judah, luckily for herself, never got time to stir to the help of Ashdod, though doubtless the Assyrian put a black mark against Hezekiah's name.

But in 705 Sargon was slain in an obscure night attack on his camp away up in the hills of Asia Minor; and at once the whole Near East went up in a flame of rebellion. Never before had an Assyrian King fallen in the field, and it seemed that the time had come when the terror which had lain like a nightmare upon all lands was to be abolished for ever. Merodach-Baladan of Babylon, of course, was always a rebel; but now Tyre rebelled, Ashdod, newly finished with her last rebellion, broke out again, Judah took the foremost place in the outbreak, and Ekron rose against its pro-Assyrian King Padi, and sent him in chains up to Jerusalem for safe keeping in the hands of Hezekiah. The city was wild with delight, and it seemed to the shouting citizens that Sargon's death meant that henceforth Assyria was no more to be dreaded.

Upon all the shouting and exultation broke in the

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sombre voice of Isaiah. If you can imagine a French statesman prophesying Gravelotte and Sedan in the days when all Paris was shouting "A Berlin," you can imagine the effect that was made on the Jerusalem mob by a message like this: "Rejoice not, O Philistia, because the rod that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a basilisk, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent. Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou art melted away, O Philistia, all of thee; for there cometh a smoke from the north; in his ranks there is no straggler." I fancy that Isaiah's life would not have been worth much had the mob of Jerusalem got its hands upon him in the frenzy of the moment.

His justification was not long in coming. Sargon had been the serpent's root; the basilisk and the fiery flying serpent was—Sennacherib! Far from being broken, Assyria's might seemed more irresistible than ever as her army poured across the Lebanon and drew its merciless lines around Tyre. Soon Tyre was taken, and Babylon was already in ruins behind the Assyrian. Isaiah rubbed in the lesson of both disasters in a single utterance: "Consider the land of the Chaldeans; this people exists no more, since the Assyrians appointed it for the abode of wild beasts. They set up their siege towers against them, and overthrew their palace and made it a ruin; there howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for so is your fortress laid waste."

And now the people of Jerūsalem, and their King, no longer exultant, could see for themselves the terrible enemy whom they had so light-heartedly provoked. They had only to go out a little west from the city, and there they could

"See the swarthy cloud of dust
Rise fast along the sky,"

The Assyrians

as Sennacherib and his host swept down the Philistian plain, burning and slaying Night by night, in the Assyrian King's camp, some fresh rebel chief came in to make his submission, and to promise that if he was let off he would never do it again The alliance had fallen all to pieces, and the more prominent rebels—Ashdod, Ekron, Lachish, Jerusalem—could look for no mercy Sennacherib gathered them in one by one, till he could say, with perfect truth “My hands have searched out the riches of the nations as a nest, and as one gathereth eggs that are forsaken have I gathered all the earth, and there was none that fluttered a wing, or opened a beak, or chirped ”

Try to imagine the terror and dismay in Jerusalem as they watched the progress of their enemy, and saw in the fate of others what their own was like to be What mercy could they expect? They were no better than common thieves captured with the stolen property upon them, for Padi of Ekron, whose presence they had hailed as the firstfruits of the downfall of Assyria, was still captive among them—a living witness to their broken faith With feverish haste they tried to put their defences into order, and to repair the walls where they had got into disrepair Houses were pulled down that the stones of them might be used to patch the walls Above all, it was necessary to bring the water of the Dragon's Well within the fortifications, both to secure it for themselves and to keep it from the Assyrians “So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the Kings of Assyria come, and find much water?”

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pæon Valley was still unenclosed by the walls which Uzziah had repaired and strengthened; and there lay an old pool, which was fed by the water led round the hill by a surface aqueduct from the Dragon's Well on the east side of the City of David. Pool and aqueduct alike were useless in the event of a siege, for they lay open and defenceless. So Hezekiah's engineers abolished the old aqueduct, "the brook that ran through the midst of the land," and closed up the cave of the Dragon's Well. Then they started to cut a tunnel underneath the east hill, beginning at both sides, in the cave behind the well on the east, and at a new spot above the old pool at the foot of the Tyropæon on the west. The work was done in a tremendous hurry, as you can understand, but it was done; and though the two sets of tunnellers nearly missed one another and cut two tunnels instead of one, the chance of a fissure in the rock allowed them to hear the sound of each other's voices and to turn so as to meet.

You can still see the old tunnel cut in such haste more than twenty-six centuries ago, with its bungled meeting and its windings. When it was finished they were so proud of their work that they cut in the rock an inscription in the old Hebrew letters, to tell posterity about it. This is how it ran: ". . . the boring. And this was the matter of the boring: when yet the hewers were lifting the pick, each towards his fellow, and when yet there were three cubits to be bored, heard was the voice of each calling to his fellow; for there was a fissure from south even to north. And on the day of the boring the hewers struck, each to meet his fellow, pick against pick; then went the waters from the issue to the pool for two hundred and a thousand cubits, and a hundred cubits was the height of the rock above the head of the hewers." So a water sup-

The Assyrians

ply was secured at the new pool, a little above the old one: and a new wall was run across the mouth of the Tyropæon Valley, which enclosed the old space which used to be called "Between-the-Walls," and secured the new pool from attack.

Isaiah looked on at all this feverish activity with mingled feelings. "Yes," he said, "it's all very well to make your preparations now, and no doubt you think you are very clever, with your new tunnel and pool; but if you had listened to God's word at first there would have been no need of all this fuss." "Ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall. Ye made also a tunnel Between-the-Walls, for the water of the old pool; but ye have not looked unto the Maker of the Spring, nor had respect unto Him that fashioned it long ago." On the one hand, he knew that the foe was in the right, so far, and that his own fellow-countrymen were in the wrong in breaking their bargain with Assyria. The Assyrian, he felt, was God's axe and saw, doing the shaping of the world as God wished. But then, on the other hand, he saw that this was not the enemy's view of the matter at all, and that Sennacherib was out simply to force his own will on all the world. The time would come when he had gone too far, and then God would break him and cast him away.

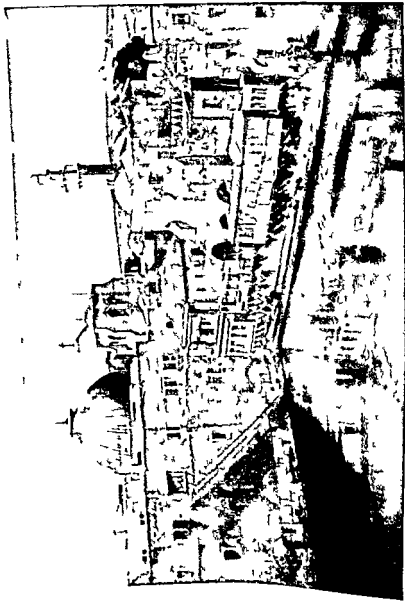
Besides, God had a purpose for Jerusalem to fulfil in the world. She had sinned and made great blunders, but for the sake of his own purpose God would still stand by her, and see that she was not overthrown. Sennacherib might be great, but God was greater. So he trusted that, in spite of Jerusalem's foolishness and Sennacherib's power and anger, the city would yet be saved.

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Meanwhile, however, she had to pass through a terrible time of anxiety. Sennacherib himself has told us of the punishment which he inflicted upon the unhappy land of Judah. "But as for Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six of his strong-walled cities, and the smaller cities round about them without number, by the battering of rams, and the attack of war engines, by making breaches, by cutting through and the use of axes, I besieged and captured. Two hundred thousand one hundred and fifty people, small and great, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle, and sheep without number, I brought forth from their midst and reckoned as spoil. Hezekiah himself I shut up like a caged bird in Jerusalem, his royal city. I threw up fortifications against him, and whoever came out of the gates of his city I punished." Then he goes on to tell of the heavy tribute with which Hezekiah bought off destruction.

Before the ruin which he had brought upon his land Hezekiah's heart failed him. He sent an embassy to Sennacherib, who was now besieging Lachish, after having given the forces of Egypt a thorough beating at Eltekeh. "I have offended," said the Hebrew King. "Return from me; that which thou puttest upon me will I bear." The Assyrian did not let him off easily; a tribute of 300 talents of silver and thirty talents of gold drove Hezekiah to the necessity of stripping the Temple of all its gold adornments. It was done, however, and in spite of the deep humiliation, Hezekiah and Jerusalem might breathe again.

Not for long, however. After the capture of Lachish (you can see it all in the British Museum), Sennacherib pressed southwards again to meet Taharqa of Egypt, who had gathered another army. He seemingly felt that it was too risky to leave Jerusalem un-



JERUSALFM THL 100L OF HPZENIAH

(See pages 10 and 89)

The Assyrians

subdued on his flank, and so he sent up a division of his army under the command of the Rab-shakeh, one of his great officers, to demand its surrender. The proud Assyrian led his men round to the east side of the old City of David, beneath the royal palace, and close to the upper end of the tunnel on which so much labour had been spent. "They came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field."

The Assyrian commander was a good linguist, and insolently shouted in Hebrew his demands to the trembling courtiers whom Hezekiah had sent to receive him, so that the troops on the wall might hear all that he said. Eliakim and his companions nervously begged him to speak in Aramaic instead of Hebrew, for they were in terror lest the garrison should fail them and break away to the Assyrians; but the more they showed their terror, the more the Assyrian delighted to torture them. Indeed, he turned openly to the guards on the wall and taunted them with their helplessness, and their King's, and the powerlessness of their God to save them. The man obviously felt that he held Jerusalem in the hollow of his hand, and he played with Hezekiah's frightened envoys as a cat with a mouse. They reported to their master, who was driven to lay the matter before God in the Temple.

And now came Isaiah's time. Now Sennacherib, by his breach of faith, in demanding surrender after accepting tribute, had definitely put himself in the wrong; and Isaiah had no scruples in standing by his own countrymen on this issue. God had chastened Judah for her sin; but now she was sinned against, and He would defend her. "Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to Me against Sennach-

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erib King of Assyria I have heard. This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning him: The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. . . . Because thy rage against Me and thy tumult is come up into Mine ears, therefore I will put My hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest."

You can imagine the rage of the Rab-shakeh, still more that of his master, when their scorn was thus answered with a bitterer scorn, and how Sennacherib would vow to treat Jerusalem as he had already treated Ekron and Tyre. But God had other plans for Jerusalem than Sennacherib's. The axe and saw had done their rough-hewing; they were now to be broken and cast aside. "And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred, fourscore and five thousand." "You are not to imagine," Dr. Samuel Johnson once sensibly remarked, "that the angel went about and knocked each man on the head, or thrust a dagger into him." The chances are that the destruction of Sennacherib's army was brought about by a sudden visitation of the bubonic plague; and, indeed, an old Egyptian legend, narrated by Herodotus, lends colour to such a belief. One way or another, the Assyrian King received a deadly blow somewhere down on the Egyptian frontier, and had to retreat at once. He called in the division which had been detached for the siege of Jerusalem, and made his way back to Nineveh. Jerusalem was saved!

Jeremiah's Jerusalem, and her Downfall

CHAPTER VII

JEREMIAH'S JERUSALEM, AND HER DOWNFALL

IF the Jerusalem of King Hezekiah's time and of the deliverance from Assyria was Isaiah's Jerusalem, the Jerusalem of a century later was no less emphatically Jeremiah's Jerusalem, and the later prophet has left his mark upon the Holy City no less manifestly than did his great predecessor. Jeremiah had a sadder rôle to play than the first Isaiah: his message was not one of triumph, but of doom, but just as you cannot think of the city in the time of Sennacherib's challenge without seeing the figure of Isaiah moving through the streets and towering above the statesmen of the time, so you cannot think of her in the last sad days before the Exile without thinking of the prophet who so loved her, and yet had to tell her that she was doomed. But before Jeremiah's time came much had happened, which we must try to gather up in a sentence or two.

Manasseh, who succeeded his father Hezekiah, had the longest reign of any King of Judah—fifty five years, three years longer than even Uzziah. One would have thought that the triumphant deliverance of Jerusalem in his father's reign would have made his devotion to his father's God a certainty; but that was far from being the case. Assyrian influence now became supreme in Judah, in spite of Sennacherib's set back. Manasseh evidently was no better than a vassal of Nineveh, and his name appears twice as such on the Assyrian records, and with Assyrian influence in matters of state came also the same influence in religion, or rather the more ancient Babylonian influence which the Assyrians simply handed on. Babylonian worship was largely, as the Bible rightly tells us, a worship of *the Host of Heaven*—Sun, Moon, and

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Stars, with the gods who were supposed to be represented by these; and both the chroniclers and prophets of the time tell us how the city was given up to this new religious craze.

The madness went further than mere idolatry, for Manasseh persecuted all who did not follow his bad example, and he "filled Jerusalem with innocent blood." And then it seems that, strangely enough, and yet not incredibly, Manasseh got more of Assyrian religion than he could stand. Apparently he took part in the great rebellion of Ashurbanipal's brother, Shamash-shumukin, which cost the Assyrian King such a desperate effort to put it down; and when the struggle had ended at last in victory, Ashurbanipal either forcibly captured Manasseh and took him away to Babylon, now reduced to submission once more, or else he summoned the Jewish King to come thither, and threw him into chains when he did come. One way or another, Manasseh had his fill of the people and the religion he had once so much admired; and when he was allowed to return to Jerusalem again, he reversed his former policy, and showed himself, according to the chronicler, a true penitent.

But to us his reign is important because it witnessed a large increase in the population of Jerusalem and a consequent extension of the walls of the capital. Since the time of Solomon the city had grown but little. Hezekiah had taken in the ground to the south which was known as "Between-the-Walls"; but that was more to secure his water supply than to provide more room. Now the city began to grow towards the north-west, and Manasseh had to secure this new suburb by building a large addition to the walls. How his new north wall ran has become a question more stubbornly disputed than any other matter of Jerusalem's history, because on it depends the other question of whether the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has any right to be considered the

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place of our Saviour's crucifixion and burial or not. If Manasseh's north wall followed, roughly speaking, the course of the present north wall of the city, then the Church was never "without the city wall," and consequently could not have been the place of the crucifixion, if, on the other hand, it did not follow the present line, but took a somewhat improbable inward bend, then the Church *may* conceivably have been the site of Calvary.

If there had been no religious vested interests bound up with this question I do not suppose that it would ever have been doubted that the Manasseh wall followed what seems to be the obviously natural line, but, as it is, many good people, with whom one may have a good deal of sympathy, would almost feel that you had "taken away their Lord" if they were told that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre lay within the ancient wall of Jerusalem, and so cannot possibly cover the site of Golgotha. And so the question remains uncertain. We are sure that Manasseh's north wall was followed by Nehemiah when he repaired the walls of the city after the Exile, and that this line remained the north wall until Agrippa built another wall about ten years after the Crucifixion, but whether Manasseh's and Nehemiah's wall followed the present line of the fortifications, or took an abrupt bend inward from the present Jaffa Gate, so as to leave the Holy Sepulchre site beyond it, is a matter that only further excavation can settle. After all, does it matter so very much? The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, however much we may deplore the tawdry decoration of the so-called holy sites and the disgraceful scenes to which Christians have lent themselves within it, is at least not far from the actual site of our Lord's death and burial and resurrection.

Manasseh was followed, after the two years' reign of Amon, by Josiah, who ranks, with David and Hezekiah, as one of the best of the kings of Judah. We all know

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the story of the finding of the Book of the Law, which is supposed to have been the Book of Deuteronomy, and the reformation of the national religion which followed. But unfortunately Josiah's politics were not as prudently managed as his religious reforms, and he paid the penalty of his unwise meddling in the quarrels of the greater nations. Assyria, after her last flicker of splendour under Ashurbanipal, in the course of which she actually conquered Egypt, was now hastening to her own doom. Exhausted by the gigantic effort which she had made, she was unable to resist the double assault which was made upon her by the Medes and her old enemy Babylon. In 612 B.C. Nineveh fell before her enemies, and the whole world stood for a while dumb with amazement, and then burst into a shout of joy and triumph at the fall of the oppressor. You can read in the fierce exultation of the prophet Nahum the feeling of almost the whole of the ancient East. "All that hear the report of thee shall clap the hands over thee for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?"

A remnant of the old Assyria, however, still refused to accept defeat, and prolonged the struggle, hopeless as it was after the fall of Nineveh, for nearly four years more. They found an ally in the new Pharaoh of Egypt, the able Saita, Necho, and he marched up into Palestine, with his own army and what was left of the Assyrian forces, to see if he could not regain for Egypt the old empire which the Pharaohs had held 900 years before. King Josiah had no need to meddle in such a quarrel. Neither Egypt nor Babylon would do him much good as a friend, and neither the one nor the other was likely to turn out of its way to attack him if he left the matter alone, and followed the old policy that Isaiah had recommended to his forefathers—"in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." But the Assyrian yoke had galled Judah's shoulders for so long, and one

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can scarcely wonder if he felt that now was the time to shake it off for ever.

So he marched out with his little army to bar the road of the allies at Megiddo—an ominous spot for a Palestinian army to meet an Egyptian one, for it was here that Egypt had won the first great victory that made Palestine an Egyptian province, just 871 years ago. The Hebrew historian tells us that the Egyptian Pharaoh had no wish to destroy Josiah and his handful. He sent a message to the King of Judah imploring him to withdraw his troops and not to rush upon inevitable defeat. "What have I to do with thee, thou King of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war (Babylon and its new King, that is); for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that He destroy thee not." Josiah would not listen. Necho's army swept the Jewish force aside, and in the rout the good King was mortally wounded. He had paid dearly for his rashness.

"And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers: and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah, and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations unto this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel." That bitter mourning was so long remembered that it became a proverb, and every great lamentation was spoken of as "a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon"—Megiddo, where Josiah fell.

And, indeed, well might Judah and Jerusalem mourn for their good King, for with Josiah the sun of the House of David set, never again to rise. The defeat at Megiddo gave a deadly check to all the good work which the King had been doing in the city. As one of the prophets put it, "The Law was paralysed, and Judgment

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did not march on " The puppet kings who were put up, first by Egypt, then by Babylon, thought of little but the indulgence of their own vices, and had not even the sense to be true to the overlord who had set them up and could pull them down, and the nation, from highest to lowest, followed the bad example set them by their kings The natural successor to Josiah was Jehoahaz, and he was enthroned, but he did not please the Egyptian conqueror, and Necho dethroned him and carried him away into Egypt, setting up his brother, Jehoiakim in his stead Jehoiakim's reign is chiefly memorable for the protests which the prophet Jeremiah made against the senseless luxury and licence in which he wallowed while his nation was going to destruction We all remember the scene in the royal palace when the denunciations of the prophet were read to the King, and he took the roll on which they were written, slit it with his penknife, and cast it into the brazier that was burning before him What Jeremiah thought of his King you may judge by the bitter words of scorn in which he predicts Jehoiakim's end "Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah King of Judah, They shall not lament for him, saying Ah, my brother! or Ah, sister! They shall not lament for him, saying Ah, lord! or, Ah, his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth before the gates of Jerusalem "

The prophecy had not to wait long for its fulfilment Four years after the battle of Megiddo, Necho's dream of an Egyptian empire was dashed to pieces at the disastrous battle of Carchemish, and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the victor, claimed Judah as part of his spoil He left Jehoiakim on the throne for a while, but the senseless fool rebelled against his master, and had his country stripped bare by the merciless soldiers whose King he had provoked Shortly after this humiliation

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he died His son, Jehoiachin, reigned for a short three months, and then the Babylonian King resolved to complete the work which he had begun, and appeared before Jerusalem

One last gleam of heroism gilded the dying Judæan monarchy in this terrible hour The young King was perhaps no wiser than his father had been, but he at least knew that a King's first duty is to his people, and he had no mind to see Jerusalem suffering the agonies of siege and sack He sacrificed himself to save his city and people, and went into exile as the ransom for his nation It was not often that Jeremiah had any cause for speaking of the later Kings of Judah in any terms than those of contempt, but even his indignation turned to pity at the sight of the young King going away into lifelong captivity for the sake of his people "Weep ye not for the dead," he said, "neither bemoan him, but weep sore for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country"

Jehoiachin was succeeded by his uncle Zedekiah, destined to be the last King of Judah What Zedekiah might have been, had he been allowed to guide himself by the advice of the great man who for all these years had been protesting against the folly and sin of Judah and her kings, we do not know At least he had some faint sense that Jeremiah had the truth with him, and that he would have done better to trust the prophet But he was a poor weak creature, who had not the manliness to stand up for what he believed to be right All around him were advisers who clung to the old, often-exploded idea that Egypt was the coming great power, and, as ever, Egypt proved the broken reed, and pierced the hand that leaned upon her Ere long Zedekiah was coquetting with the southern power again, and Jeremiah found himself left to that bitterest of all lots, that of the man who sees his country going to destruction and can

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do nothing to save her—nothing but prophesy doom. Manfully and steadfastly he did his duty—hated, imprisoned, threatened with death, he still maintained in face of everything that the policy of the King and Court was fatal, and that Babylon was destined to triumph, even at the cost of the destruction of Jerusalem and the kingdom. You can imagine how such teaching sounded in the ears of men who had staked all upon the victory of Egypt and were certain that they would win. Jeremiah's life during those last dreary months must have been one long martyrdom.

At last the gauntlet was openly thrown down to Nebuchadnezzar, and Zedekiah rebelled. The result was only too ample a justification to the prophet's foresight. Egypt, as he had foreseen, "helped in vain and to no purpose," and before long the terrible Babylonian army was encamped round about Jerusalem. This time there was to be no deliverance. The walls of the city were strong, and the Babylonian army preferred to reduce it by blockade rather than by storm. For a moment it seemed as though the miracle of Isaiah's time were to be repeated, for a report of the advance of a relieving army under the new Pharaoh of Egypt, Ha-ab-ra, the Hophra of the Bible, caused the Babylonians to raise the siege. But Hophra's army declined the battle which the Babylonians offered, and retreated into Egypt again, and the leaguer was drawn closer than ever round the doomed city. Jerusalem knew by sore agony what so many other cities had suffered so often at the hands of Assyrian or Babylonian troopers—the dreary days of hunger and thirst, the sight of the long lines of captives impaled on stakes under the walls and dying of pain and starvation, the torture of others with all the devices that devilish ingenuity could imagine.

At last human nature could hold out no longer. Zedekiah and a few picked men tried to break out

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through the besiegers' lines to the desert, but they were pursued and overtaken, and, with their capture, the resistance of the city broke down. "And the Chaldeans burned the King's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem" (586 B C)

So Jeremiah summarises the dreadful story of the sack, knowing the customs of the warfare of the time, we can read into that single sentence all the misery and the untold and untellable cruelty which accompanied a nation's death agony under the merciless hands of an Oriental conqueror. Just 115 years before, Sennacherib had turned back from the inviolate city, baffled and broken. Now the cup of Jerusalem's sin was full, and the wine had to be drunk. Jerusalem was to rise again from her ruins, she was to know a new life, more outwardly splendid, perhaps, than that which was now closing in disaster, but never again was she to be the home of a King of the House of David until the coming of Him who, outside her walls, "reigned from the Cross."

CHAPTER VIII

AFTER THE EXILE EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

ONE of the strangest features about the story of Jerusalem is the fact that it was only after she had fallen, and after the glory of her Temple had been destroyed, that she took the unique place in the affection and devotion of the nation that we find her holding in the time of our Lord. David had made her the capital of the kingdom, Solomon made her glorious, Uzziah and Hezekiah strengthened her defences, Manasseh widened her boundaries, Josiah purified her, but it was

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in the time of the Captivity that she gained that grip on the hearts of the Jewish race which she has never since lost, and which has been expressed in some of the most touching poems in the world's literature. "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. . . . If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

The reason is plain. It was her conqueror's policy to leave in the land the peasantry, while he carried away to Babylon all the pick of the learning and craftsmanship of the country. In a little country like Judah, that learning and craftsmanship had been almost entirely centred in the capital; and therefore all the light and leading of the nation was gathered in Babylonia, and longed for its home and for the city which stood for all that they counted great and holy. It was this section of the race, and not the dumb peasantry left in Judah, which made the national tradition and wrote the national literature; and therefore Jerusalem in ruins assumes an importance which she had never possessed in the days when she was at her greatest splendour, and we almost entirely lose sight of the country Judah, because the city Jerusalem has gathered up into herself all the hopes of the race.

We are not to imagine, of course, that Jerusalem, though ruined, was left absolutely uninhabited during the Exile. Indeed, we know that this was not the case, for Jeremiah has left a strange story of how eighty men came from Shiloh, Shechem, and Samaria, in mourning guise, to sacrifice in the ruined Temple, and how they were treacherously slain by one of the leaders of the gangs of broken men who lived in the city. But her

After the Exile: Ezra and Nehemiah

glory had departed, and the people who were left in the land avoided her, as though a curse lay upon her. Away in Babylon, however, the exiles still hoped and prayed; and before fifty years were out the second Isaiah, the prophet of Babylon, was foretelling the restoration of the Holy City. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received at the Lord's hand double for all her sins." "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city. . . . Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion." Soon he was linking his prophecies with a name—the name of the deliverer who should give her people back to the desolate city. He was Cyrus, the Persian conqueror, "whose right hand the Lord had holden, to subdue nations before him."

To Cyrus the question of Jerusalem was merely one small point in his general policy. The King of Babylon, Nabonidus, whom he had conquered, had roused the enmity of all the nations of his empire, and of the priests of his own Babylonian gods, by gathering to Babylon the images and the treasures of all the religions of the empire. Cyrus, who had won his victory so easily as he did simply because of the ill-will excited by this policy of Nabonidus, immediately reversed it, and sent back all the images and treasures of the different gods to their own lands and cities. The Jews shared in the general restoration, that was all; but it seemed to them the very interposition of God.

Yet the success of the first return from Exile was but partial. The first return, led by a Persian governor,

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Sheshbazzar, and with the high priest, Joshua, and Zerubbabel, a Prince of the House of David, as its native leaders, managed indeed to rebuild the Temple, after about twenty years of weary effort; but all their work was sorely hindered by the jealousy of the tribes around them, foremost among them the Samaritans. At last, in 516 B.C., the second Temple was completed. It was an exact copy of Solomon's Temple, so far as size went; but there was a woeful falling-off in the splendour with which it was built and furnished. "Who is left among you," says the prophet Haggai, "that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?"

And then, from 516, in spite of several attempts to restore the walls of the city, all frustrated by the envy and opposition of the neighbouring tribes, the record of the restoration is a blank for nearly another seventy years, when the scribe Ezra obtained permission from King Artaxerxes to lead back from Babylon another great company, largely consisting of priests and Levites. But Ezra's well-meant attempt to reform all at once all the abuses which he found existing at Jerusalem ended in temporary failure. He was too much of a churchman and too little of a man of business, and he forgot that human beings have hearts, and that if you wish to succeed with men it is better sometimes to hasten slowly than to try to rush things. And so Jerusalem still remained forlorn and defenceless for several years more, and Ezra himself, disheartened and disappointed, dropped out of sight in the community which he had failed to bring up to his own high standard.

But better things were ahead, and, above all, a less impracticable leader. Away in Susa, one of the Hebrew exiles, Nehemiah, had risen to hold the im-

After the Exile: Ezra and Nehemiah

portant post of cupbearer at the Court of Artaxerxes of Persia. He had a passionate love for the Holy City, and when news came to him from Judah of the miserable state of things at Jerusalem, he took his courage in both hands, and risked all his Court favour in the effort to gain permission from his King to put things right in his native land. Fortunately, he found that amiable weathercock in a good temper, and was allowed to sacrifice himself for his country; and soon he was on his way across the desert, amply provided with a guard of cavalry and with royal orders to the local governors, bidding them give him all possible assistance.

Unlike his predecessor, Ezra, Nehemiah was a thorough man of business, accustomed, from his position, to handle men, not easily discouraged, willing to make allowances and to wait, if necessary, for success, but capable also of a flame of anger, and a hard man to deal with if he suspected faithlessness. So he succeeded where Ezra had failed, simply because he knew human nature and how to deal with it. Someone has said of the two that the difference between Ezra and Nehemiah was this, that when Ezra saw wrong being done, he tore his own beard; but when Nehemiah saw it he tore the beards of the wrongdoers. It is quite true. "When I heard this thing," says poor Ezra, "I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished." No such thing with Nehemiah when he is faced by exactly the same wrong-doing. "And I contended with them," he says, "and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God" never to do it again. Little wonder, I think, that he got things done; he was too masterful a man to cross.

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In all the Bible there are not any pages more vivid than those in which he tells the story of how he built the walls of Jerusalem, and made it once more a fenced city. Newly arrived at Jerusalem, you see him going out in the night with a handful of his guards, and riding round the ruined walls in the moonlight to view for himself the work he had to do. You see him riding out by the Valley Gate, down at the south west end of the city, and travelling round past the wall that King Hezekiah built to enclose the new pool for which he had brought the water through the Siloam tunnel, then round the south eastern angle of the ruined walls, and up the eastern side of the old City of David, the cold moonlight casting black shadows from the tumbled masses of ruined stonework, until at last there was no room, in the narrow valley, for his mule to pass among the ruins, and he was obliged to dismount and go up the Kidron Valley for a bit on foot. Then, when he had seen enough, he turns back to the Valley Gate again, and goes back to his bed without saying a word to anyone of what he had been doing—a man who could keep his own counsel and make his own resolves. It is curious to think that that little account of his moonlight ride has become one of the most precious documents in existence, and that all our attempts to trace the line of the ancient walls of Jerusalem have to rest upon its four verses and the other nine verses in the 12th chapter of his book, which tell of the dedication of the finished wall. Not all of the landmarks which he describes have been discovered yet, but we can trace most of the wall pretty well from his description—all but that troublesome bit from the Jaffa Gate to the Fish Gate on the north side, on which depends the whole question of the Holy Sepulchre.

The rest of Nehemiah's story is just as picturesque

After the Exile: Ezra and Nehemiah

as its beginning. You see Jerusalem for nearly two months in a perfect fever of activity—such heart has a single man been able to put into the poor broken-spirited creatures who had failed Ezra so badly. You see half of the population toiling like mason-ants on the wall, "each over against his own house" that he may have a direct interest in seeing that he builds well, the other half armed and watchful against the enemies who ring the city about; and Nehemiah moving about from point to point around the rapidly growing wall, always with his bugler beside him, that a single blast might call the whole people at the first sign of danger. Fifty-two days of incessant and heart-breaking toil, and the walls are built once more; a rough job, no doubt, like the Long Walls of Athens, but a job accomplished. Jerusalem is once more a fenced city. An amazing feat of endurance, and all the more amazing when you think that it was done by a discouraged handful, and done in the face of constant threats and unceasing criticism and ridicule.

Then followed the completion of the work of Ezra which had failed, and that good man got his heart's desire at last, and saw his people committed solemnly to the keeping of the Law. Nehemiah's work was done, and well done. Nobody can read his little book without seeing that he had a good opinion of himself, nor, I think, if we are honest, without admitting that his opinion was justified.

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CHAPTER IX

JEW OR GREEK JUDAS MACCABÆUS AND HIS BROTHERS

FROM the time of Nehemiah until the time of the Maccabees—that is to say, for about 250 years, from 431 to 175 B C—the history of Jerusalem is both obscure and uninteresting. During the later Persian period she played no great part in history, though we know of more than one disaster which befell her in that time. But though no great figure emerges to make her story memorable, this was one of the great shaping times of the city's history, when Judaism was becoming the thing which we see when our Lord came, when the scribes were gradually rising to the position and influence which we see them occupying in the Gospels, and when the Temple ritual and psalter developed to an extent of which previous generations had not dreamed. On the whole, it was a time of comparative peace and prosperity for the city and the little patch of country, perhaps about twenty miles by thirty, which was recognised as Judæa, just as it was for most of the lands which were under the sway of the Persian Kings.

But then, in 333 B C, came Alexander the Great, and the crash of the Persian Empire before his hammer-strokes, and though Jerusalem was not directly involved, as Tyre was, in the great struggle, the Macedonian conquest was destined to produce for her results of the most far-reaching character, and to provoke on her behalf the heroism of one of the most purely heroic figures that her history had ever known. The Jewish historian Josephus has a wonderful story of how the high priest of the time, Jaddua, refused to

Jew or Greek

break his oath of allegiance to the Persian King, and how, to punish him, Alexander marched from Gaza to Jerusalem. Jiddua went out to meet him, arrayed in his high priestly robes, and wearing his mitre with the sacred Name inscribed on it, and to the amazement of his generals the great conqueror immediately saluted the venerable figure and adored the Name, saying that he had recognised in the high priest one who had appeared to him in a dream in Macedonia, and had inspired him to march against the Persians.

The story goes on to say that he then went with the high priest into the Temple, offered sacrifices to Jehovah, was shown the prophecies of Daniel concerning himself, and gave permission to the Jews throughout his new empire to live according to their own laws. It is a very pretty little story, but it has probably no more foundation in fact than most of the other legends of which this time is full. But Alexander's early death left his vast empire to be fought for by his generals, and the fortunes of the struggles which ensued made Palestine a bone of contention between two of the most famous of the houses which were descended from the *Diadochi*, as they were called. The Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria and Palestine waged long and bitter strife before the question of supremacy in Palestine was settled, and for long it seemed that Israel was once again to enter into Egyptian bondage under the able Kings of Egypt. Indeed, it would have been better for the Jews if they had, and if the easy and enlightened domination of the Ptolemies had been theirs instead of the harsh yoke of the Seleucids.

It was during the time when the Ptolemies were the overlords of Judah that one of the greatest achievements of Hebrew scholarship was accomplished in the shape of the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek.

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The legend-says that this great work was due to King Ptolemy Philadelphus, who was told by his librarian, Demetrius the Phalerean, that he ought to possess such a translation. Ptolemy therefore wrote to the high priest at Jerusalem, and the latter sent down to Alexandria seventy-two men, with a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures written in letters of gold, and these men, being shut up singly, each produced, in seventy-two days, a translation of the Scriptures which was exactly the same as those of the other seventy-one scholars. The story is, of course, quite impossible, were it only for the reason that no two scholars, let alone seventy-two, ever agreed on anything, to say nothing of such a great piece of work as a translation of the whole Hebrew Bible. But, all the same, this translation, which still goes by the name of the Seventy, or the Septuagint (LXX), was produced more or less about this time, and for the use of the innumerable Jews who lived in Egypt and had forgotten, or never learned, Hebrew.

Finally, however, the Seleucids were left in possession of Palestine. I will not say in peaceful possession, for their rule was marked by one of the fiercest and most determined struggles that even that most blood sodden land has ever known. The outbreak of it was provoked by the policy of King Antiochus IV, who called himself *Epiphanes*, or "God Manifest," but who was called by others *Epimanes*, which means "Madman." He was a brilliant, unscrupulous man, with a charming manner and a great love for Greek culture, and the misfortune was that he insisted on all the peoples under his rule becoming imitation Greeks, whether they would or no. The mercenary wretch who was seeking the Jewish high priesthood under this new King saw that it was his interest to become more Greek than the Greeks themselves. Accordingly, in addition to offering the King 440 talents of silver as the price of the office, he changed

Jew or Greek

his name to Jason, and offered Antiochus another 150 talents if he would set up a Greek Gymnasium in Jerusalem and register the Jerusalemites as Antiochenes, a piece of flattery to the King.

Antiochus was charmed, and soon the sober, steady people of Jerusalem saw the young Jews of the city strutting about with short Greek cloaks and broad hats (a thing unspeakably hateful to a true Hebrew), and wrestling and running or boxing in the Gymnasium, stripped and oiled, according to the Greek fashion. This was bad enough, but it was only the beginning of sorrows. Soon it was commanded that Greek gods, and especially the King himself, God-Manifest, should be worshipped in the Temple. Antiochus found another priest, Menelaus, who outbid Jason by another 300 talents for the high priesthood and the right to make his countrymen break the law of Jehovah. This was too much for the Jews, and Menelaus was driven from his office, and took refuge in the citadel with the Macedonian garrison of Jerusalem. Antiochus stormed the city, slaughtered thousands of the people, and defiled the Temple by sacrificing swine on the altar. More than that, he demanded that Judaism should be abandoned everywhere, and that Greek rites should take its place.

For a while the Jews were only passive resisters to this ordinance, and the persecution was terrible. Women who had caused their children to be circumcised according to the ancient Jewish custom were hanged, with their children tied about their necks. Neither age nor sex was spared, and the Macedonian troops went out over the country, like Claverhouse and his dragoons in the Scottish killing-time, forcing obedience to the King's command under pain of death.

At last Apelles, the King's commissioner, came to Modin, where dwelt an old priest named Mattathiah, with his sons Judas, Jonathan, Simon, John, and

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Eleazar. Mattathiah was requested to sacrifice according to the Greek rite, but indignantly refused; and when an apostate Jew came forward to the altar to offer the sacrifice, the old priest sprang upon him, slew him with a single blow, and then slew Apelles also. Then he summoned all who loved their country and its laws to follow him, and betook himself to the mountains, with his sons and friends, as an open rebel. The old man soon died under the hardships of guerilla warfare; but Judas, his son, proved himself a master of the art of war. Once and again he beat the troops sent against him, so that his name became famous, and both friends and enemies knew him as Judas Maccabæus, or Judas the Hammerer.

Some of his exploits, indeed, were of almost incredible daring. On one occasion, Lysias, the governor of Syria under King Antiochus, sent a great army of 40,000 foot and 7,000 horse against him, under Nicanor and Gorgias. So confident were they of success that a number of slave-traders accompanied them to get the first pick of the Jewish captives as slaves; for Judas had no more than 3,000 men wherewith to meet the great Greek host. The Macedonian captains divided their forces, and Gorgias, led by Jewish renegade guides, marched into the hills, hoping to surprise the camp of Judas, while Nicanor, with the main body, halted at Emmaus, and waited till Gorgias and his 5,000 should drive Judas and his handful down into the valley. Judas, however, had no intention of waiting to be attacked. He broke camp, and marched his men down towards Emmaus, while Gorgias and his men, finding only an empty camp, were wandering disgustedly among the hills, seeking for their elusive enemy. At dawn, Nicanor's great camp was wrapped in slumber, when Judas and his band suddenly plunged down from the hills upon them. In a moment the great camp was in the wildest confusion. Nicanor never got his men fairly ranked; all were swept away in

Jew or Greek

a wild tide of fugitives, with the Jewish swords slaying remorselessly in their rear.

When Nicanor had been fairly disposed of, Judas, as wary as he was brave, turned to meet the possible attack of Gorgias and his 5,000; but Gorgias and his men, weary and disgusted by their fruitless hunt among the hills, were in no mood to face a victorious enemy, and stole away by roundabout roads to join the wrecks of Nicanor's army, leaving the plunder of the camp at Emmaus to the Maccabee. It was not always, of course, that fortune favoured the Jewish captain so remarkably; but even his defeats were marked by such heroism on his part and that of his brothers as to win for them almost as much credit as if they had been victories. After a long series of heroic achievements, Judas at last fell, fighting bravely, at Eleasa; but his brothers, though none of them could be compared with him for simple and single-hearted bravery and patriotism, carried on the struggle with a considerable measure of success.

It was under Simon Maccabæus, one of the five brethren, that Jerusalem witnessed a change, which, while it gave peace to the citizens, woefully ruined the chance of future ages ever seeing what the City of David must have looked like in ancient days. The Macedonians had established, on the slope below the Temple Area, a great and lofty fortress which overlooked the Temple courts, and from this vantage-ground their garrison perpetually annoyed and slew the worshippers, even at the altar. Judas had tried in vain to take this citadel, but at last Simon managed to capture it. Having done so, he summoned the whole population of the city, and, with three years' toil, they not only destroyed the offending fortress, but reduced the height of the whole hill, so that no future fortress might ever be able to overlook the Temple from the south. The débris was cast into the Tyropæon Valley, and "thus," says Dr. Mac-

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alister, "he brought the valley almost to a level with the two ridges, and in the process destroyed every trace of the City of David, of Solomon, of Hezekiah. There have been few more gruesome archæological disasters in the world's history than this inspiration of the Evil One which came into the mind of Simon Maccabæus." No doubt Simon was very proud when he could say that not a stone of the Macedonian citadel remained upon another, and that the very contour of the hill had been changed so that never again could a similar fortress over-crow the Temple courts, he little knew what "curses, not loud but deep," he was earning from future generations by his action.

The Temple was not even freed for long from a dominating fortress, for Simon's own descendants, the Hasmonæan priests and princes, built another stronghold, the *Baris*, which overlooked the sacred area from the north-west even more effectually than the Macedonian *Akra* had done it from the south, and which later, after it had been remodelled by Herod the Great, became the Tower of Antonia, which played so tragic a part at a later date in the great siege of the city by Titus. One other great change the Hasmonæan princes made upon the city. Their palace was built, not on the ancient site of Solomon's magnificent house, but across the Tyropæon Valley, on the upper slope of the West Hill, looking across what remained of the valley to the Temple courts, to which it was joined by a bridge. And this palace has a deep interest to ourselves, for it was in it that Herod Antipas was staying on that day when Pontius Pilate, puzzled and worried over the question of what to do with Jesus of Nazareth, sent his prisoner down from the Herodian Palace at the Jaffa Gate, where the Roman governor habitually resided when in Jerusalem, to the Hasmonæan palace, to be mocked by "Herod and his men of war." The relative positions of these two

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has ever known, but "impressed himself upon the fabric of the Jewish religion, as hardly any native ruler had done since Solomon"—such a man, however hateful he may seem to us, cannot be denied a certain claim to greatness of a kind "That very great and very evil man, Herod the Idumæan," says one authority, while another has put the problem of his life thus "If the title Great be ever deserved by the cruel and the unjust, history has not erred in granting it to Herod, the son of Antipater"

For us, the chief interest of this great, wicked, adventurous Edomite lies in the fact that he practically created the Jerusalem of the Gospels, the Holy City to which our Lord came, in the courts of whose splendid Temple He taught, and over whose impending doom He wept as He beheld its beauty from the Mount of Olives It is a strange destiny which has thus linked the names of the most brilliant example of successful worldliness and the most wonderful example of the serene and selfless devotion which has overcome the world The link, of course, is merely a superficial one, and Herod does no more than provide Jesus with the background against which His life reveals itself, still, even so, the connection is of surpassing interest

Herod himself had no love for Jerusalem, and preferred to live either at the new Samaria, which he had created and called Sebaste, or, in his latter days, in his new citadel at Jericho He hated the fanaticism of the capital and the bitter legalism which was coming more and more to dominate her religion, and, in return, the people of Jerusalem despised him as an outcaste Edomite, hated him as the destroyer of the last of their own Hasmonæan house of princes, and feared him as a cruel tyrant All the same, ambition and policy combined to make him the greatest builder whom the city had known since the days of Solomon "He found himself on the throne of Solomon," it has been said, "and he set

King Herod

himself to emulate the traditional glory of that King of old " Little of the amazing amount of work which he did at Jerusalem has survived, at least above ground, but the dominating features of the Jerusalem which the Saviour saw as He came over Olivet from Bethany were every one of them the creation of Herod

His whole power and influence, of course, were thrown into the design of making Jerusalem practically a Greek city Like Antiochus Epiphanes, but with better success, he established a regular Greek Gymnasium in the city, where the Jewish youth, stripped and oiled, took part in athletic contests imported from Greece, he also built a Theatre, which was no doubt as popular with the younger Jews and as hateful in the eyes of their elders as the Gymnasium In the year 25 B C or thereabouts he celebrated an athletic gathering in the capital, which was meant to be repeated every five years in honour of the Emperor Augustus

Magnificent prizes were offered for chariot races, boxing, and running, for musicians and choral actors, and wild beasts were exhibited, fighting with one another, or with men The Gentiles and the Hellenised young Jews flocked to these games with eagerness, but you can imagine the feelings of the true Jew, whose ancestors had fought alongside Judas Maccabæus against the corruptions of Antiochus, as he witnessed what to him seemed these disgraceful and impious shows, which seemed to bring to life again the hated monster against whom the Maccabæans had fought triumphantly Herod soon found that his attempt to make Jerusalem a modern city had brought him more trouble than popularity

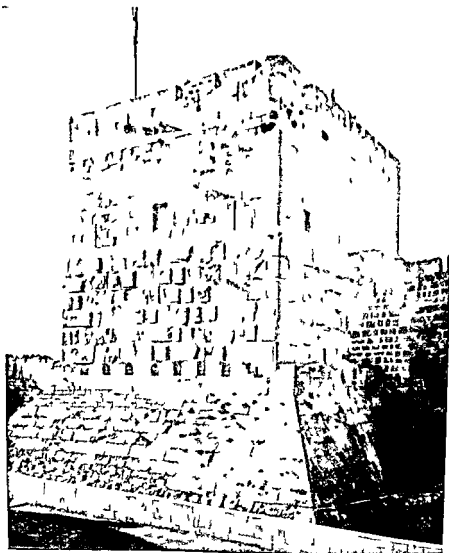
Some of his other work was both more necessary and less likely to cause trouble He had gained Jerusalem by force of arms, and the walls which he had breached when he captured the city in 37 B C had to be repaired, just as David, and Solomon after him, had to repair the

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breaches in the old Jebusite fortress of so many centuries ago. So far as we know, he made no change in the old lines of fortification, save, of course, that they were all heightened and strengthened, in accordance with modern ideas. The old First Wall, which Solomon had built to enclose the new addition of the south-west hill, still ran across the city from the Jaffa Gate to the Temple enclosure; and the Second Wall of Manasseh and Nehemiah still followed its old course, whether that ran practically on the line of the present north wall or bent inwards with a great re-entrant angle from a little above the Jaffa Gate, as the supporters of the claim of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre maintain. But Herod made two changes which must have greatly altered the appearance of the city on its northern side.

At the north-west corner of the Temple Area, where the *Baris* of the Hasmonæan princes stood, he created a great fortress which he called the *Antonia*, in honour of Mark Antony, whose star was in the ascendant in the Roman sky at the time. It stood on a great rock scarp, where the Turkish barracks now stand—a great example of the utmost skill of the military engineers of the period, with four towers, three of them more than 70 feet high, and the fourth more than 100, so that the Temple courts beneath were completely dominated by it.

At the other side of the city, near the Gate Genath, the Corner Gate, which corresponds roughly to the present Jaffa Gate, he reared a huge combination of palace and citadel. It had three towers, Hippicus, Phasæl, and Mariamme, of which Hippicus was 120 feet high, Phasæl 135, and Mariamme at least 70; while a fourth tower, a great octagon of more than 100 feet in height, lay a little to the north. Under their shadow lay the great halls of a vast palace with colonnades and chambers innumerable, and gardens which



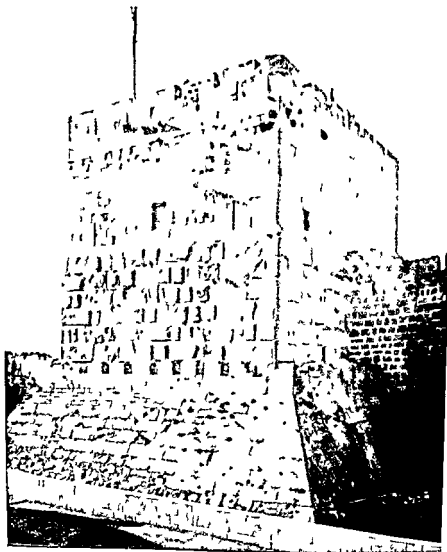
THE SO CALLED TOWER OF DAVID See pages 78 and 88
Really Herod's Tower Phasael of Hippicus (foundations only)

King Herod

were watered by a new high level aqueduct, which brought its waters within the walls and distributed them by conduits and metal fountains. Here Herod resided when he was in Jerusalem, keeping a large garrison within its towers for his protection, and here, a few years later, the Roman Procurator had his *Prætorium*, to which our Lord was brought for His trial by Pilate. The centre of civil authority was thus, for the first time, shifted from its ancient position on the south east hill to the west hill.

All these great works, the Gymnasium or *Lyseus*, the Theatre, Antonia, and the palace and citadel, were finished before 22 B C. The rebuilding of the Temple, which he began in 20 to 19 B C, was possibly an attempt to wipe out the unpopularity which he had gained in Jerusalem by the great games of five years earlier. He broached the subject to the citizens with all the address of which he was so great a master, pleading that he wished only to take advantage of his friendship with the Roman power to accomplish what the builders of the second Temple had wished to do, had not their subjection to the Persian yoke forbidden, and to raise the Temple to the height of the original building of Solomon. Even so he had the greatest difficulty in gaining their consent, and it was only when he had promised that not a stone would be pulled down until he was ready to replace it, and had put a thousand priests into training as builders, that he was allowed to proceed.

The actual House of God was finished in eighteen months, but the construction of the huge cloisters and enclosures dragged on for another eight years, and even long after Herod's death work was still going on, so that the Jews could say to our Lord "Forty and six years was this Temple in building." In actual fact the last touches were not put to the gigantic work until A D 63 to 64, so that it was barely completed before it



THE SO CALLED TOWER OF DAVID See pages 79 and 89
 Really Herod's Tower Phasael or Hippicus (foundations only)

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perished, never to be replaced, in the storm of fire which swept the city in the siege by Titus (A D 70)

I shall attempt no description of the Temple which our Lord visited and cleansed, and which, in spite of the character of its builder, He called "My Father's House", for the facts which we have do not allow of any satisfactory reconstruction, as the disagreements between those who have attempted such a thing clearly show. "All modern reconstructions of the work, except the outer cloisters," says Sir G A Smith, "must be more or less fanciful" What we do know is that Herod's Temple was a building 172 feet long from east to west and 172 feet high, with a porch of the same height, which was also 172 feet broad, while the Temple behind was only 120 feet broad "As a lion is narrow behind but broad in front," it was said, "so the Temple was narrow behind but broad in front" Its interior ground plan was that of Solomon's Temple, the Holy of Holies being a cube of 35 feet every way, and the Holy Place 70 feet by $34\frac{1}{2}$ feet Thus the Temple was still comparatively small, but rose to a height which, to our minds, seems quite disproportioned to its length and breadth "If Herod was forbidden to extend the House, he would at least make it soar!"

What it lacked in size it made up in splendour, for it was entirely built of huge blocks of white limestone and adorned upon the front with plates of gold, so that its lofty walls and its golden roof glittered far and near with white and gold Of its style of architecture we know next to nothing, save that "neither Herod nor his generation were likely to feel incongruous the conjunction of several building styles on the same area," and that therefore it is likely that the House was more gorgeous than tasteful

If the Temple was small in itself, the courts around it were magnificently spacious In front of the Great

King Herod

Porch stood the Altar, probably on the spot which is now the es-Sakhra rock in the centre of the Mosque of Omar. Twelve steps led down from the Porch to the Court of the Priests, in which this altar stood; and at the right hand of the Porch stood the great Laver, which had replaced the Bronze Sea of Solomon. Beyond the Priests' Court lay the Court of the Men of Israel, which, again, was separated by a wall from the Court of the Women, which lay fifteen steps lower than the Court of Israel, but had a gallery which enabled the women to see the rites which went on within the Court of the Priests. Beyond the Court of the Women was the Hêl, a narrow terrace, and, outside this, a latticed barrier, with a notice forbidding foreigners to enter further, on pain of death. One of the curiosities of survival has preserved for our reading this very notice, and it is strange to think that the eyes of our Saviour must have fallen once and again upon this inscription as he passed from the Court of the Gentiles into the Court of the Women, on his way into the Court of the Men of Israel. It runs thus:

LET NO STRANGER ENTER
WITHIN THE BALUSTRADE
AND THE ENCLOSING WALL
SURROUNDING THE SANCTUARY
WHOSOEVER MAY BE CAUGHT
ON HIMSELF SHALL BE THE
BLAME FOR HIS CONSEQUENT
DEATH

Fourteen steps lower down lay the Court of the Gentiles, which surrounded the whole Temple Area, with its greatest breadth to the south and its next greatest to the east. The Temple thus stood considerably out of the centre of the Area and towards its north-western corner. This outer court was surrounded by splendid colonnades and cloisters, which must have added much to the dignity

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of the whole structure. To gain the space for these vast outer erections Herod had to do once more on a huge scale what Solomon had already done to a smaller extent—namely, to build up gigantic retaining walls from the bottom of the valleys upon which the Temple looked down, and to fill up the spaces between these and the hillside with solid earth or masonry. The flat area which he thus acquired corresponds roughly to the present *Haram esh-Sherif*; and the remains of Herod's great walls, and the arched substructures with which the mass above was held up, are still visible in places, though for the most part they are buried deep beneath the débris of successive sieges and destructions. It must have been to these immense works that the disciples called their Master's attention as they passed down from the Temple Area into the Kidron Valley, saying: "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" His sad answer, "Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down," may have seemed to them almost the prediction of an impossibility; yet within forty years there was left scarcely more than enough to emphasise the completeness of its fulfilment. Josephus, with pardonable pride in the glory that had departed, tells us that so great was the combined height of the battlements of the Temple enclosure and the scarp of the Kidron Valley on which they stood "that, if anyone looked down from the top of the battlements or down both those altitudes, he would be giddy, while his sight could not reach to such an immense depth." This, of course, is exaggeration on a heroic scale; yet the appearance of the great walls rising sheer above the rugged valley, and enclosing such a great complex of splendid building, must have been singularly imposing when viewed from the slopes of Olivet opposite.

Such, then, was Herod's Jerusalem, which was also



T AL 2 JER F L F F L
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CHAPTER XI

THE HOLY PLACES

WHEN our Saviour wept over her, Jerusalem was rapidly approaching the total destruction which He foresaw, and which befell her forty years later. I am not going to tell again that most pitiful and tragic story of the siege by Titus, and the utter destruction and desolation with which it ended. The most pitiful thing about the whole tragedy was that so much of the appalling horror of the siege, and of the ruin which marked its progress and its conclusion, was entirely needless, and was the work, not of an open assailant, but of Jerusalem's own children, not in the course of an honourable defence, but in bitter and brutal fighting between the factions into which the city was divided.

But the main point to be noticed is that, however the ruin was brought about, it was total. The conclusion of the siege marked a complete break in the history of the ancient Jerusalem. The city was absolutely and utterly destroyed, save for one or two buildings, such as Herod's palace, which the Romans preserved for the convenience of administration. Jerusalem rose again from its ashes, but the point is that it was a new Jerusalem, and not a mere revised edition of the old. One or two fixed points, of course, remained unaltered. The siege had not affected the ancient highways outside the walls, and consequently the new gates occupied practically the same sites as their predecessors, and the streets leading from them followed the same lines. But all else was changed, and so thorough was the destruction that it would have been difficult even for the oldest inhabitant of the old Jerusalem to be certain as to the exact spot occupied by any particular building of the city which he had once

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known so well. Forty years later came a second destruction of the place by Rufus, and then followed the restoration by Hadrian, or, rather, the building of the new city of *Ælia Capitolina*, into which Jews were forbidden to enter.

Even all this was but "the beginning of sorrows" for the unfortunate city. Since Hadrian's day, Persian, Byzantine, Arab, Crusader, and Turk have continued the disastrous succession, and each, in making himself master of the city, has contributed his own quota towards making its ancient form and face unrecognisable. The only conquest that has not directly added to the ruin which is the main obstacle to knowledge of the ancient city has been the last under Allenby; and though no wrecked walls prepared the way for the entrance of the British troops in 1917, the results of our occupation will almost inevitably transform Jerusalem, in more peaceful ways, as much as another siege would have done.

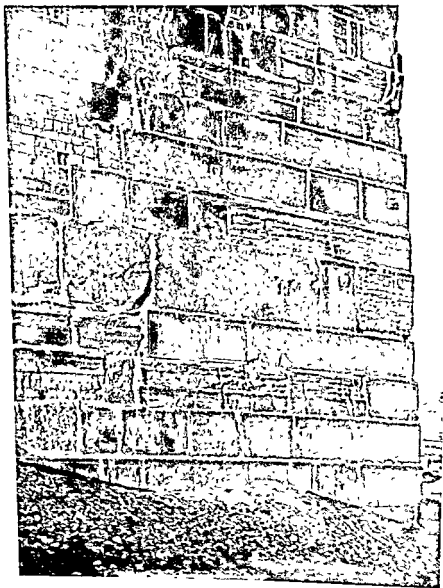
It is quite plain, therefore, that, in the main, to look on the surface of the present city for the bulk of the sacred sites of the Gospels or of the Bible generally, is a task likely to be much more profitless than to look for a needle in a haystack. In the latter case, the needle is presumably there, before the search is started; in the case of Jerusalem, the chances are a hundred to one that any particular site has long since been swept away by the endless destructions and reconstructions which the city has undergone, or is buried many feet deep in rubbish, which, in turn, has had houses built upon it. Nevertheless, there are certain features, mostly natural ones, of which we can be reasonably sure that they remain, broadly speaking, the same as in the days of old, though they may have suffered many minor changes; and it will be best to look at these first.

There need be no doubt that the Mount of Olives of to-day is the Mount of Olives of the Gospels. Much

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though we may deplore the taste which has plastered it over with pretentious and incongruous buildings, and which has made the traditional Garden of Gethsemane more like a tea-garden than the solemn witness of our Saviour's Agony, the main features of the Mount remain virtually unchanged. Its roads still follow the ancient lines; and though this very fact may make us doubtful whether the Saviour would choose, as the scene of His solitary wrestle, a spot so public as the present site must always have been, yet there can be no question that the real Gethsemane was not very far away. "Wherever it was," says Sir G. A. Smith, "any of the olive-groves on the Mount which have not been dressed as the Franciscan garden has will give the pilgrim a more natural impression of the scene of our Lord's Agony than the latter can."

Among other certainties are the three valleys—the Kidron, Hinnom, and the Tyropæon—the Virgin's Fountain, which is certainly the ancient Gihon and Dragon's Well, and En Rogel, which is the present Bir Eyyub, or Job's Well, a little further down the valley than the Pool of Siloam. The Pool of Siloam of to-day, unattractive spot though it may seem to those who were brought up to sing about "cool Siloam's shady rill," is also one of the certainties. It is certainly the pool which Hezekiah made for the water of the Virgin's Fountain, and to which our Lord sent the blind man. The tunnel which runs from the Virgin's Fountain to Siloam is also unquestionably Hezekiah's work; but the present village of Siloam has nothing to do with the historic past, in spite of its name. The present slope which runs from below the south end of the Haram esh-Sherif down to the old Pool of Siloam is certainly the site of the ancient Jebusite stronghold which became the City of David, and the ancient piece of wall which is now preserved as one of the ancient monuments of the land is a bit of the



FOUNDATIONS OF TEMPLE AREA (HERODIAN). See page 82.
"Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here"

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but it must always be remembered that to accept a fourth-century tradition as proof for a site of events which happened more than 300 years before is a somewhat risky business. If London had been utterly destroyed in the year of the accession of King James I, and the destruction had been repeated several times between then and now, how much value do you imagine a historian of A.D. 3534 would be likely to attach to a present-day identification of the exact spot where an obscure incident happened in the first year of the reign of the British Solomon? Not very much, probably, and the identification of the position of the Cœnaculum is in exactly the same case.

The same thing must be said about the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Here, again, we have a tradition going back to the fourth century and the Empress Helena's supposed discoveries of that time. Whatever may be one's feelings towards the traffic and the shameful scenes which profane the name of devotion within the present church, no one can be blind to what Dr Macalister has called "the vast romance of the great Church," and the stream of devotion (however misguided we may think this manifestation of it) which has poured forth here through the centuries. But, in the end, we must come down to hard facts, and realise that the whole question of whether it is possible for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to be the true site of the scenes of our Lord's Crucifixion and Resurrection depends, as we have seen, on the question of the line of the Second Wall, and that the balance of probability is not in favour of the claim. The grouping of so many so called sacred sites within the Church is, of course, another question, and has no reason to be respected at all. Yet even if we may decide against the claim of the traditional site, we can feel that the true site was, at least, not far distant, and that devotion to the Saviour, and honour to His great sacrifice,

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need not be any more linked with a precise spot than the worship of His Father with Mount Gerizim or Mount Zion.

The undoubtedly false sites are legion. First and foremost, neither Gordon's Calvary (so-called), nor the Garden Tomb, has a shadow of authority for the claim which is made for it. The skull-like appearance of Gordon's Calvary did not exist in the seventeenth century of our era, at which time the hill was occupied by houses, whose cisterns were subsequently broken into by quarrying operations, thus giving the appearance of the two eye-holes. The Garden Tomb belongs to a cemetery of the third or fourth century A.D., and was the tomb of a Christian of comparatively late date. We have already seen that the *Via Dolorosa*, with its "Stations of the Cross," cannot possibly have been traversed by our Lord on the day of His Crucifixion. The real *Via Dolorosa* probably lies beneath many feet of débris, somewhere between the present citadel and the present North Wall of the city. David's Tower has nothing to do with David, nor has David's Street, whose name is only a dragoman's invention. The many pools attributed to Solomon, Hezekiah, and others have nothing to do with those whose names they bear, and are mostly the work of that great builder Herod.

Perhaps the greatest puzzle of all is the position of the pool of Bethesda, which has at least six claimants. It is not easy to choose between them, as there are difficulties in the way of every one; but in spite of the objections to identifying the site with the Pool of Siloam, the fact that the Gospel narrative makes it clear that the spring which fed the pool was an intermittent one seems decisive in favour of Siloam, which alone is fed by an intermittent spring, the Virgin's Fountain, which earned its ancient name of the Dragon's Well from the idea that the dragon or serpent periodically swallowed the water

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of the spring, and then vomited it forth again. As to the Tombs of the Kings and of the Prophets, Absalom's Pillar, and other similar ancient monuments, there need be no dubiety, as almost all of them declare, by their style of architecture or workmanship, that they belong to a later date than that which is claimed for them; and no time need be wasted on such identifications as that of the "House of the Rich Man," who never existed as an individual, but only as a figure in a parable, or that of the "Arch of Ecce Homo," about which the one thing that is quite certain is that Pilate never set eyes upon it, much less showed Jesus to the multitude from it.

The net result of such consideration of the nominal sites of the Gospels may seem somewhat disappointing and disillusionising. Yet, after all, have the scenes which have disgraced the so-called Holy Places for centuries offered any encouragement to the hope that a true devotion would be stimulated by an absolutely unquestionable identification of any single one of the scenes of Christ's Life or Passion? The supreme facts of both are independent of locality or surrounding, and we would do well to remember that the desire for the sight of the precise spot where any of them happened is not so much devotional as sentimental. Sentiment has something to say for itself, no doubt, in presence of such facts; but it was our Lord Himself who, while He tolerated its curious probing of the facts of His Passion, also told Thomas that there was a greater blessedness than that of the material vision.